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THE

HISTORY

OF

WALES,

IN NINE BOOKS.

WITH AN

APPENDIX.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM WARRINGTON,

CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF BESBOROUGH,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

"Wherever Nature, though in narrow space,
Fosters, by Freedom's aid, a liberal race;
Sees Virtue save them from Oppression's den,
And cries, with exultation, 'These are men;'
Though in Bœotia or Batavia born,
Their deeds the story of the world adorn."

HAYLEY'S ESSAY ON HISTORY.

Brecon:

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PREFACE.

THE circumstances and actions of the People, whose history is related in this work, stand single and original in the annals of the world. A nation, who, from remote antiquity, were distinguished by their independency of spirit, defending for ages the rights of nature and of liberty in the bosom of their native mountains, affords a spectacle sufficiently interesting, to awaken curiosity, to excite admiration, and to call forth every liberal sentiment.

It is therefore a just occasion of regret, as well as of surprise, that the History of Wales is no where to be found, to this day, but in the Chronicle of the monk Caradoc of Llancarvan; in which nothing farther is given, than a simple detail of facts. In this interesting field of history, no attempt has yet been made, to investigate the motives of policy, to trace back effects to their causes, to delineate with just discrimination personal or national characters, and to digest the materials of the narration in that perspicuous order, which is essential to the grace and utility of historical composition.

This deficiency, the author has attempted to supply, in the work now offered to the work now offered to the world. The design will be allowed to be laudable; with what success it has been executed, it remains for the public to determine. He flatters himself, that he has opened many new sources of information; he has also been careful to examine the old; and it is with confidence he can say, that he has neither servilely transcribed, nor implicitly followed the modern historians. What he has done, neither precludes, nor is intended to preclude, the

future labours of other writers who are deeply read in the Welsh language and manuscripts. The field is still open to a more able historian, and to the profound researches of the learned antiquary.

From an idea, that minute inquiries in to the antiquities of a country are not properly within the province of the general historian, the author has purposely declined them; and therefore hopes he shall not be charged with deficiency, in not having executed what it was never his intention to undertake.

It is not the least praise of an historian, that his writings do not discover his country; lest from the sentiments which breath through the following pages the author should be thought to have failed in this essential point, he thinks it necessary to declare that he is an Englishman; and whatever preponderancy may be discovered in this work to the side of the Welsh it is neither the partiality of an author to his subject, nor the prejudice of a native; but the voluntary tribute of justice and humanity which is due to the cause of freedom, and the violated rights of nature.

In the course of this work the author has been much indebted, for the perusal of the works of many valuable writers, to Thomas Faulkner, Esq. of Chester; a gentleman who mingles with deep erudition the liberal desire, of giving his assistance to any design, which may be useful to the republic of letters. He is under the like obligation to Philip Yorke, Esq. of Erthig, near Wrexham, in Denbighshire whose taste and knowledge in literature, whose gentleness of manners and benevolent spirit, render him an amiable friend, and a valuable man. For the improved orthography of the Welsh words interspersed through the work, the author has been indebted to the ingenious Mr. William Owen, of London.

NECESSARY DIRECTIONS TO THE READER WHO IS A STRANGER TO THE WELSH LANGUAGE; SHEWING THE RIGHT PRONUNCIATION OF ALL THE LETTERS THAT DIFFER FROM THE ENGLISH ORTHOGRAPHY.

TO read Welsh, a right Knowledge of the Alphabet is all that is necessary; for, (not going to a nicety) all the letters retain one invariable Sound, which must be distinctly pronounced, as there are no Mutes. Letters that are circumflexed must be pronounced long, as *Bôn* like the English Bone; *Bŵn,* Boon; *Bîn,* Been, &c.

C, as *C* English in *Can;* but never soft as in *City.*

Ch, as Greek χ properly pronounced. If instead of touching the Palate with the Tip of the Tongue to pronounce K, you touch it with the Root, it will effect this sound.

Dd, as *TH* English in *Them;* that is very soft; not hard as in *Thought.*

F, as *V* English.

Ff, as *F* and *Ff* English.

G, as *G* English in *God,* but never soft as in *Genius.*

I, as *I* English in *King,* and *ee* in *Been;* but never as *I* in *Fine.* Fine according to the Welsh Orthography, would be pronounced Veenè.

Ll, as *L* Aspirated; and can be represented in English only by Lh or Llh.

Th, an *Th* English in *Thought;* but never soft as in *Them.*

U, as *I* English in *Bliss, This, It,* &c.

W, as *Oo* English in *Good.*

Y, as *U* English in *Burn,* though in the last Syllable of a Word, and all Monosyllables except Y, Ydd, Ym, Yn, Yr, Ys, Fy, Dy, Myn, it is like I in Sin, It, &c. both its Powers are nearly shewn in the Word Sundry, or Syndry.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

WALES.

BOOK I.

CONTAINING A REVIEW OF THE BRITISH HISTORY BEFORE THE RETREAT OF THE ROMANS OUT OF BRITAIN.

IT is probable, that Britain was first colonised by the Gauls, * about one thousand years before the birth of our Saviour; † a period of time coeval with

* Verstegan, cap. IV. p. 88. Buchanani Rerum Scoticarum historiæ, p. 67. Amsterdam edit.

† Whitaker's history of Manchester, 2nd edit. vol. I. p. 7.

the reigns of David and Solomon. The names of Albion,* and of Britain,† are supposed to have been given to the island by the Belgic Gauls, who inhabited the opposite shores.

It is common to all people who derive their ideas from the few objects which arise in a state of nature, to give names to persons and to things, from the peculiar circumstances incident to them. Accordingly, the Gauls gave to this country the name of Albion, from the eminences and chalky cliffs, which were constantly exposed to their view.‡

It was somewhat more than three centuries before the Roman invasion of Britain, that the northern tribes of Europe began that spirit of emigration, which afterwards

* Whitaker's history of Manchester, p. 10.

† On the etymology of this name, see ibid. p. 11, and Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary of Britain, p. 8. N. B. He wrote in the year 1568.

‡ Whitaker's history of Manchester, 2d edit. p. 10.

like a deluge overwhelmed the western world. It was likewise about that period, that the Belgæ, forsaking their native seats upon the banks of the Rhine, migrated into Britain,* and settled in the western, and in the southern parts of the island.†

The language of the ancient Britons, their religion and Druidical institutions, as well as their attachment to that *order* of men called *Bards*,‡ were exactly similar to those which prevailed among their probable ancestors the Gauls.§

Before the time of Cæsar's invasion, the island was divided into three parts, Lloegria or England, Albania or Scotland, and Cambria or the province of Wales.‖

* Rowland's Mona Antiqua, Dublin edit. sect. IV, p. 19.

† Whitaker's Hist. of Manchester, 2d edit. p. 232. Buchanan Hist. Scot. Rer. p. 55.

‡ *Beirdd.*

§ Buchanan's Hist. Scot. Rer. p. 53. 67.

‖ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 10.

Each of these was subdivided into districts under their respective *Reguli*, over which they presided with a limited authority.* The principles of civil liberty are discerned in the polity of ancient Britain, in the restraint which was laid upon the sovereign power by general assemblies, whose concurrence with the royal authority was necessary to enact or to abrogate laws. The order of succession in the British states was commonly hereditary. But the idea of indefeasible right had not, in that early period, affected the principles of government; for the line of succession was frequently broken by the king and nobility, whose concurrence for this purpose was absolutely necessary.† The equal division of property by *Gavel kind* uniformly took place in the disposition of private inheritance.‡

Such was the regulation of the British

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 171. Whitaker's Hist. of Manchester, 2d edit. vol. I. p. 336. vol. II. p. 6, 92, 206.

† Whitaker, ibid. vol. I. p. 335. ‡ ibid. p. 363.

states in times of tranquility, when no domestic or foreign danger threatened the public safety. But in seasons of emergency, when the Common-Weal called for the union and the force which result from the government of one head, the confederated princes elected a supreme sovereign; * and the person who was called to this dignity had the title of *Brenin Prydain oll*, or the king of all Britain. † This occasional honour, by a maxim of state, was originally confined to one imperial line; and in later times was continued through its two branches, the *Cynethian* and *Cornwall* families, until it finally closed in the person of Cadwalader, the last king of the ancient Britons. ‡ As unlimited authority was vested in the supreme sovereign, it is probable, that the Britons did not suffer such a power to continue beyond the season of necessity and danger.

* Rowland, p. 171. Whitaker, ibid. vol. I. p. 206, 207.

† Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 171.

‡ Ibid. p. 171.

THE love of glory, like every other passion, is heightened by indulgence, and becomes insatiate in proportion to the extent and variety of conquests. Under the impulse of this spirit, Julius Cæsar invaded Britain. The season of the year not allowing him to extend his conquests, he concluded a peace with the natives; and, having taken hostages for its observance, he suddenly embarked in the night for Gaul.* The Spring following he returned with a considerable reinforcement. On this occasion, Cassivellaunus† was vested with the supreme command of the war, by a general assembly of the British States. Having received considerable losses, his territories having been laid waste, and especially being alarmed at the revolt of the auxiliary Britons, he was soon after obliged to sue for peace.‡ Before that time Cæsar had marched into the country as far as the Thames,§ and having forded

About fifty years before the Christian æra.

* Cæsar's Comment. Grævius' edit. lib. IV. p. 145, 154.

† *Caswallon.*

‡ Cæsar, ibid. lib. V. p. 176.

§ Tafwysc, or Tame Water.

that river near Windsor, he stormed Verulamium,* the principal town in the territory of Cassivellaunus. After this expedition, being afraid of commotions in Gaul, he received the submission of the Britons; and, taking with him hostages for the security of the peace, he returned to the continent.†

The death of Cæsar, with the succeeding troubles in the Empire, allowed the Britons to enjoy, some years, a season of tranquility; and which was continued through the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, produced by the rational policy of restricting the boundaries of the Roman Empire.

The great preparations which Caligula made for the invasion of Britain, ended A. D. 40.

* Verolanum takes its name from the river VVer, called in British Gwernlan, Caer Municipium by the Romans, and Verlamcester by the Saxons, by whom it was destroyed. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 24.

† Cæsar's Comment. Grævius' edit. lib. V. p. 161, 164, 165, 175, 176.

in a vain parade upon the ocean, and in offering insult to the dignity of a Roman Senate.*

In the reign of the Emperor Claudius, the Romans gained a permanent footing in the Island, owing to the divisions which had ever subsisted among the Britons. The Belgic inhabitants, who were engaged in commerce, and who resided in the towns of the Isle of Wight,† and in those which lay upon the western coast, were with some difficulty subdued by Vespasian.‡ The native Britons, more independent and brave, from their different habits of life, continued their resistance against Plautius and Ostorius Scapula,

* Dion Cassius Leunclavii edit. lib. LIX. p. 659. Instead of invading Britain, Caligula employed his soldiers in gathering cockle-shells into their helmets from the sea-shore, as the spoils of the enemy; and sent letters to the Roman Senate, demanding a triumph, as if he had obtained a victory over the enemy.

† Called Wight by the Saxons, but Gwydd by the Britons, signifying a conspicuous place. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 17.

‡ Suetonius, Oxford edit. book VIII. p. 240.

who successively commanded the Roman armies. On the arrival of Plautius in his government, he defeated the Britons in several actions; but finding that his victories proved indecisive, and seeing them prepared for further resistance, he desired that the Emperor would take in person the command of the forces.* When Claudius joined the army, which lay encamped upon the banks of the Thames, he found the passage of that river disputed. The Britons, however, were at length obliged to give way, and he advanced into the country of the Trinobantes,† and took the strong fortress of Camulodunum,‡ which had been the residence of the British King Cunobeline.§ These fortunate events were immediately followed by the submission, or the conquest, of the other nations.

A. D. 43.

A. D. 44.

When the affairs of the Provinces were settled, the Emperor returned to Rome,

* Dion Cassius, Leuncl. lib. LX. p. 679.
† *Tre'n-obantwys.*
‡ *Camaled-ddin* and *Camddin.* § *Cynfelyn.*

leaving the newly-subdued states, and the further conquest of Britain, to the direction of Plautius. The name of Britannicus, which Claudius assumed, on his return into Italy, and the splendour of his triumph, mark the formidable idea which had been conceived of the British arms, by the Roman people.*

During the remainder of the government of Plautius, no considerable advances were made in the conquest of the country; and he soon after returned to Rome, and was succeeded by Ostorius Scapula.

A. D. 50. This general found the affairs of his province in the greatest confusion. The winter had already commenced: The Iceni,† the Brigantes,‡ and other nations, thinking they had little to dread from a new general, who was unknown to the army, revolted, and had recourse to arms.

* Dion Cassius, Leuncl. lib. LX. p. 679.

† *Uchcyniaid*, Upper-settlers.

‡ *Brigyntwys*, First-comers.

After several bloody encounters, these nations were reduced to obedience, and Ostorius carried his arms into many parts of Britain, which had been hitherto unknown.

In this expedition, he forced his way through the Cangi,* who opposed him, in whom the principal strength of each nation consisted; and, continuing his march, he penetrated as far as the coast which lies upon the Irish sea.†

In the course of this war, the fate of Britain depended upon the virtues and military talents of Caractacus ‡ This prince was sovereign of the territory

* *Goeangiaid.* Each nation or tribe had numbers of stout young men, called Cangi, whose business was to protect the cattle, and remove them from one pasture to another. Baxter's Glossary, p. 73.

† Taciti Annales, Antwerp edit. lib. XII. p. 195, 196.

‡ *Caradog.*

inhabited by the *Ordovices† and the Silures,‡ and was the son of the late King Cunobeline.§ Having, with infinite resources, and with variety of fortunes, opposed, nine years,|| the Roman arms, he was at length obliged to retire among the Silures. And this brave people, whom neither mildness nor severity had subdued, eagerly ranged under his conduct. In order to preserve their territories from being made the seat of war, Caractacus marched into the country of the Ordovices, where he stationed his army in a situation chosen with great military skill.¶ At this place he was opposed by Ostorius with the legionary troops. The few moments which

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 32, 33.

† *Arddyfieich,* the inhabitants who had settled beyond or north of the Dyfi. Lewis Morris.

‡ *Iselwyr,* Lowlanders, being the inhabitants of the lower part of Wales, between the Severn and Wye. L. Morris.

§ Baxter's Glossary, p. 67.

|| Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 32.

¶ Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 33, 34, called *Caer Caradog,* an eminence situated between the rivers Clue and Clevidia, in Shropshire.

preceded this important action, were employed by Caractacus in animating his soldiers. But their valour was unequally opposed to the force of discipline; and the British camp was stormed with great slaughter, though not without considerable resistance. In this battle, the wife and daughter of the British King were taken prisoners; and his brothers, soon after, surrendered themselves. Caractacus himself survived this misfortune, to experience a more cruel destiny. After his defeat, retiring to the country of the Brigantes, Cartismandua, the Queen of that territory, with a view of gaining the friendship of the Romans, or afraid of their resentment, betrayed him into the hands of Ostorius; and he was sent to Rome as a prisoner of the utmost importance. A general curiosity was excited in Italy to behold the figure of this extraordinary man, whose superior talents and virtue had been so long and so ably employed in opposing the Roman power.*

* Taciti Ann. lib. XII. p. 196, 197.

The magnanimity of this prince, when he was exhibited a public spectacle at Rome, has been a frequent subject of encomium.*

The habits of war and of conquest, with the cruel nature of their popular amusements, had introduced into the character of the Romans a degree of ferocity, inconsistent with just ideas of heroism; and

* The speech of Caractacus to the Emperor Claudius: Tacit. Annal. lib. XII.—" If the moderation " of my mind in prosperity had been answerable to " my quality and fortune, I might have come a friend " rather than a captive into this city; and you, with- " out dishonour, might have entered into league with " me, royally descended, and then at the head of " many nations. As my state at present is disgrace- " ful; so yours is honourable and glorious. I had " horses, men, arms, and riches; why then is it " strange I should be loath to part with them? " But since your power and empire must be uni- " versal, we, of course, among all others, must be " subject. If I had immediately yielded, neither " my fortune, nor your glory, had been so eminent " in the world. My grave would have buried the " memory of it, as well as me: whereas, if you suf- " fer me to live now, your clemency will live in me " for ever, as an example to after ages."

which, too frequently, steeled them against the impressions of pity, and led them to disdain, as unmanly weakness, the finer feelings of humanity.

This defeat of the Silures was soon revenged, by several victories which they gained over the Roman forces; and in this situation Ostorius died, worn out with anxiety and fatigue. * A. D. 53.

After his death, the Emperor sent Aulus Didius into Britain: but the age of that general prevented any extraordinary exertions against the enemy; † and he was succeeded by Verannius, who, dying a little time after he had taken the command, left the Roman concerns in the greatest confusion. ‡ A. D. 57.

In this state of affairs, Suetonius Paulinus was sent to command the Roman forces in A. D. 58.

* Taciti Ann. lib XII. p. 198.

† Ibid. p. 198.

‡ Ibid. lib. XIV. p. 250.

Britain. His first undertaking was to subdue the Ordovices, who inhabited that part of the island which is now called North Wales; and he secured the conquests he had made, by settling garrisons in the country. Suetonius was the first Roman, who penetrated as far as Mona.* Being opposed by the Druids † on his entrance into the island, and influenced also by national and religious animosity, he massacred many of those people, cut down their groves, laid level their altars, and destroyed the seminary of that ancient ORDER.‡ After this event, the Druids are said to have retired into Ireland, to the Isle of Man,§ and into the Orkneys and Hebrides.|| In a subsequent period being driven out of these retreats, by christian zeal, they are likewise said to have sought an asylum in Norway, Iceland,

* Taciti Vita Agricolæ, Op. p. 457.

† *Derwyddon* or *Drywidion.*

‡ Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 151. Rowland, p. 100.

§ *Manaw.*

|| Rowland's Mon. Ant. p, 101, 107.

and other regions of the north:* at length, the Druidical system was universally abolished, after it had long established a boundless tyranny upon the ruins of human reason.

It was an uniform principle, in the policy of the Roman state, to exercise a mild dominion over the nations they had conquered, but this was changed to a system of severity, when the subdued provinces, from a sense of injury or of freedom, revolted from their obedience. The nature of their government was likewise stained, by the rapacity, and by the severe administration of individuals. Thus the Roman yoke, however lightly it might be borne by *Asiatics*, who were tamed to submission by hereditary slavery, was an oppressive burden to the Britons, bred in the ideas and in the habits of a wild independency. At this juncture, their native spirit, impatient of restraint and resentful of injury, was urged into fury by a train

* Rowland, p. 110.

of evils, which acted equally upon their feelings, as on their national pride and superstition. An imposition of taxes upon their land and cattle, the arbitrary violation of property, with the frequent indignities offered to their women, were causes which kept alive a sense of resentment.* They were likewise affected by the treatment of Boadicea, a powerful sovereign of the Iceni. This princess had just become a widow, and was left to the protection of the Roman state; her husband also, by his testament, had made the Emperor Claudius coheir with his daughters, in hopes that it might render him indulgent to his family. But that prince was no sooner dead, than his treasures were seized, and his territories desolated;† the foulness of the procedure being coloured by the indecent pretence, that the Roman law permitted only citizens to bequeath their property.* The remons-

* Galgacus's speech, Taciti vit. Agric. Op. p. 462.

† Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 251.

‡ Heineccius Element. Jur. lib. II. Tit. XII.

trance of the queen against these injuries, produced no other effect than to accumulate indignities upon her family; the chastity of her daughters was violated, and her own person dishonoured, by being publicly scourged.*

These evils, however enormous, were only partial, and they did not extend to every part of the island. But the late destruction of the Druids, it is probable, gave a general shock to the feelings of the Britons; and with the fury of enthusiasts, they rushed to the standard of Boadicea. The first impression of this multitude was astonishingly great: like the sea overswelling its bounds, they carried with them irresistible force, and desolated the country. The two cities, Camulodunum and Verulamium, first experienced their fury,† the inhabitants of which colonies were slaughtered without any distinction of rank or sex, and under circumstances

A. D. 60.

* Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 251.

† Ibid. p. 251, 252.

of uncommon barbarity; * almost an entire legion were cut in pieces, coming to the assistance of their countrymen; and eighty thousand persons, either Roman citizens or allies, are said to have perished in the general carnage.† It is to be lamented, that in attempting to recover the freedom of her country, so much cruelty should have stained the character of this princess; but some extenuation may be found in the nature of her own wrongs, in the injuries which her subjects had suffered, and in the fierceness of uncultivated life.

A. D. 60. Suetonius, at this time, was engaged in the conquest of Mona. Hearing of the revolt, he marched with confidence, through an irritated country, to London, ‡ a place

* Dion Cassius, lib. LXII. p. 700.

† Ibid. p. 704.

‡ This city was originally called *Tronewydd*, or New Troy: afterwards *Dinas Beli*, from having been the residence of Belus; then it was called *Caer Ludd*, from king Lud; but its general appellation was *Llundain*.

of extent, and of great commercial importance.* Finding himself unable to keep possession of the town, he was obliged to take the field with a few cohorts of auxiliaries, with a single legion, and the *Vexillarii* † of another, and to leave the women, the aged, and the infirm, to the fury of the enemy. ‡ With this army, consisting only of ten thousand men, Suetonius opposed Boadicea, at the head of two hundred and thirty thousand Britons. § On this decisive day, that princess appeared in a chariot, with her daughters by her side; and in a military dress, rode through the ranks, to animate the soldiers || Besides this, the Britons had another incitement to victory as they were to fight for the safety of their families, and in the

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 20.

† Various are the opinions respecting the Vexillarii, the most probable is, that they were light armed troops belonging to each legion.

‡ Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 252.

§ Dion Cassius, lib. LXII. p. 704.

|| Ibid. p. 704.

presence of their wives, all of whom, agreeably to the custom of their country, were ranged in waggons upon the rear of the army.* But valour alone, unsupported by discipline, was not able to make any impression on the firmness of veteran troops; and after a long and obstinate resistance, the British army was entirely defeated. Near eighty thousand of the Britons fell in this day's action, or in the pursuit. Boadicea, unwilling to survive the ruin of her country, suddenly disappeared, having put an end to her own life, as is imagined, by poison.† It is astonishing, that after the severe defeats which the Britons had received, they should be able to keep their national strength unbroken, and their spirit unsubdued.

A. D. 62. The danger and difficulty of the war were so great, that Nero was inclined to relinquish the conquest of Britain. Being

* Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 252.

† Ibid. p. 253.

informed that the rough demeanour of Suetonius might be some obstacle to a peace, he recalled him into Italy; and he placed several officers successively in command, whose inactivity or milder temper gave time for resentments to subside.*

These generals were succeeded by others of more active and martial dispositions. Petilius Cerealis subdued a great part of the Brigantes, who inhabited the northern districts of England; and Julius Frontinus conquered from the Silures the forest of †Dean,‡ and the present counties of Hereford and Monmouth.§ A. D. 75.

During the time that the Roman interest thus fluctuated in Britain, the inhabitants were exposed to every injury and insult, which might be expected from the

* Taciti Ann. lib. XIV. p. 253.

† In British, *Cantref Coch.*

‡ So called from the Danes: Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 75.

§ Taciti in vit. Agric. Op. p. 458.

rapacity of luxurious governors, and the will of a licentious soldiery. To remedy these evils, to give stability to conquest, and to introduce peace and order, with the mild habits of social life, required the virtues, and the well-tempered policy of Julius Agricola.

A. D. 78. This Roman was sent by Vespasian to command the forces in Britain, where he had already acquired a considerable reputation by his military services. On his arrival, he found the Ordovices revolted, who had begun their hostilities by cutting off a squadron of horse stationed upon the frontiers. It was late in the summer when he opened the campaign, supported only by the *Vexillarii* of the legions, and a body of auxiliary troops. On his approach, the Ordovices, not daring to face him in the field, retired to the mountains; into which difficult places they were immediately pursued, and the country laid waste, with great slaughter of the inhabitants. This success induced Agricola to attempt the second conquest of Mona.

The chiefs of the Ordovices had retired into that island, in which they thought themselves perfectly secure, the Romans not having any ships upon the coast, and regarding the straits of *Menia* as impassable: but the auxiliaries of the army, by order of Agricola, having crossed that arm of the sea on horseback, the Britons were so astonished at a spectacle to them altogether new, that they immediately laid down their arms.*

When Agricola had finished the conquest of Mona, he directed his views to the milder designs of peace and reformation. Well instructed in the art of governing, he was more desirous of preventing the causes of discontents, than of punishing their effects; and, equally tempering lenity with rigour, he abolished that system of tyranny, which had so frequently driven the Britons to revolt, and had fixed in their breasts the most fatal resentments.† To these examples

* Taciti vita Agricolá, Op. p. 458. † Ibid.

of justice and humanity, he added others of an extensive and liberal policy. With the most engaging manners and address, he drew many of the Britons out of their deserts into social communities, and persuaded them to change their rude habits, and precarious subsistence, for the art of peace, and the comforts of civilized life.* The Roman people, from a singular policy, were used to extend, with their conquests, the sciences and the arts; were accustomed to soften the ferocity of war, and to disarm it, in some measure, of its evils, by introducing their milder manners, with the refinements and elegancies of life, with a view, no doubt, to polish, to enervate, and to enslave mankind.

In attentions, like these, to civilize the Britons, and to alleviate their sufferings, Agricola employed the winters which he passed in the island, and, in the course of seven summer campaigns, he extended

* Taciti vita Agricola, Op. p. 459.

his conquests into Caledonia. He likewise erected two different lines of fortifications, one of which was formed near the river Tay,* and the other along that narrow isthmus which lies between the Frith of Forth and the Clyde.† But Domitian, who hated virtues which he would not emulate, and sickened at the glory he could not attain, recalled Agricola to Rome; and this great man soon after died of a lingering disorder, with the suspicion of having been poisoned at the instigation of that tyrant.‡ A. D. 85.

Tacitus, by a few strokes of his inimitable pencil, has given the portrait of this amiable Roman.

During the latter part of the life of Domitian, and in the short reign of Nerva, the Roman interest was neglected in Britain. A. D. 98.

* Buchanani. Rer. Scot. lib. IV. p. 101, 102. Camden, Holland's translation, p. 789.

† Langhori. Ant. Albion, p. 112, 113.

‡ Taciti vit. Agricolæ. Op. p. 459, 465, 466.

More important objects, on the eastern frontier of the empire, employed the martial genius of Trajan.

The wise policy of limiting, and of preserving its boundaries, was the leading principle in the government of Adrian. A. D. 120. In the course of his reign, however, he came into Britain; and, the more effectually to secure, he narrowed the bounds of the Roman conquests, ordering the more northern forts to be deserted, which had been raised by Agricola, and placing their garrisons on the line of fortifications, which he then formed from the Tyne to Solway Frith.*

To preserve dominion by the influence of a just and mild administration, was well suited to the philosophic spirit, and benevolent temper, of the two Antonines. But a commotion having arisen in Caledonia in the reign of Antoninus Pius, he A. D. 138.

* Buchan. Rer. Scot. lib. IV. p. 103. Spart. vit. Adriani in Scriptoribus August. p. 6.

sent Lollius Urbicus into Britain, who, after he had suppressed the insurrection, confined the Picts to their former boundary.*

The dissolute reign of Commodus having had an influence on the discipline of the legions, the Caledonians broke over the wall of Adrian, and cut in pieces a Roman general with his army; but the insurgents were soon after driven back with great slaughter, and continued quiet during the remainder of that reign.† A. D. 183. A. D. 185.

The precarious situation of Pertinax and of Didius Julianus, who in succession possessed the empire, giving them no leisure to attend to the affairs of Britain, the natives of that island enjoyed a season of tranquillity; in which state they remained to the latter end of the reign of Severus. A. D. 192.

* Julius Capitolinus in vit. Antonini Pii in Scriptoribus August. hist. p. 19.

† Dion Cassius, lib. LXXII. p. 821.

Under pretence of restraining the irruptions of the northern Britons, but probably to withdraw his sons from the plea-
A. D. sures of Rome, Severus came into the island
207. and though advanced in years, and so broken with infirmities as to be carried in a litter, he proceeded through forests and morasses to the farthest parts of Caledonia.* After having surmounted the difficulties of the march, and many fierce encounters with the Picts, and not being able himself, to finish the war, on account of
A. D. his increasing infirmities, he left one of his
208. sons to conclude a peace with that people; and on his return rebuilt with stone, and more strongly fortified the rampart of A-
A. D. drian. Soon after Severus had finished this
212. imperial work, he died in the city of York.†

* Herodian. lib. III. p. 133, 135, 137.

† Bede's Eccl. Hist. lib. I. cap. XII. page 50. Joannis Rossi, Antiq. Warwic. Hist. Reg. Angl. p. 49. Orosius, lib. VII. cap. XVII. p. 502. Hist. August. Script. Spartian, p. 71.

From the death of this Emperor to the reign of Dioclesian, few incidents occur in the history of Britain, the Romans having been too much employed by convulsions in their own empire, to attend to the distant provinces. In the course of this reign Carausius,* and afterwards Allectus,† assumed an independent sovereignty in Britain.‡ But when Constantius was elevated to the rank of Cæsar, in that singular system of government formed by Dioclesan, he reduced the island to its former state of a province of the empire.§ This prince died in the city of York,‖ soon after he had succeeded to the purple as emperor of the west; and during the greatest part of his reign, he kept the Britons in quiet by the influence of his mild vir-

A. D. 284.

A. D. 298.

A. D. 307.

* *Caron.* Flores Historiarum, p. 91, 84.

† *Aleth.*

‡ Flores Hist. p. 91, 84.

§ J. Rossi, Ant. War. p. 50.

‖ Called Eboracum by the Romans, Caer Efrog by the Britons, and Euerwyke by the Saxons. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 30.

A. D. 337. tues.* The more decisive qualities of Constantine the Great continued to enforce their obedience.

At this period a storm began to gather in the north, which gradually acquiring greater force and a deeper gloom at length overspread the British hemisphere.

As the dread of the Roman power declined with the retreat of the legions, several nations, the Picts, the Scots, and the Saxons, made incursions into Britain. The Picts were natives of the island, and inhabited the country near to the wall of Antonine, upon the eastern, and western coast, and on the mountains of Caledonia.† The Scots were a recent colony from Ireland, and had settled, by invitation of the Picts, upon the western shore of Scotland, very early in the fourth century.‡ The

* Ranulph. Higden, lib. IV. p. 219. Gale's Script. Flores Historiarum, p. 92, 96, by Math. Westminster.

† Whitaker, ibid. edit. vol. II. p. 209.

‡ Whitaker's Hist. Manchester, vol. II. p. 248, 249, 250.

Saxons, one of the most warlike nations in Germany, had emigrated from the northern parts of that country, and had settled along the sea coast from Jutland to the mouth of the Rhine. *

The history of this period is barren of important incidents, and exhibits very little agreeable information; we scarcely meet with any thing, but pictures of rude life and manners, or melancholy details of war and devastation.

With a policy peculiar to the Romans, they had permitted the kingly office in the full extent of its ancient authority, to remain in many of the provinces of Britain. † In the course of this period, two princely families had arisen into pre-eminence, above the rest of the British Reguli; appearing in their ancient lustre on

* Verstegan, chap. III. p. 20, 55, 56, 82, 84.

† Hist. Manchester, vol. I. 2d edit. p. 331. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 115

the decline of the Roman power, and attaining to that royal distinction which had formerly belonged to their ancestors. * These were the princes of the Cynethian and Cornwall families. † The former were sovereigns of the territory belonging to the Strath-Clyde ‡ Britons, and of the principality of North Wales; § and were descended from Coel, a northern prince, who, by his marriage with the heiress of North Wales, became the sovereign of that principality. || The daughter of this prince succeeded to his dominions, and was called Helena, and was afterwards married to the Emperor Constantius, ¶ who, having gained by that union a natural right to the crown, the Roman government became for a time very popular. In after times, the line of the princess Helena becoming extinct in Britain, the

* Rowland's Mon. An. p. 145, 171.

† Ibid. p. 171.

‡ *Ystrad Clwyd.*

§ *Gwynedd.*

|| Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 145, 163.

¶ Ran. Higden, lib. XIV. p. 219. Flores Historiarum, p. 92. Rowland, p. 161, 162, 163, 166.

succession of the Strath-Clyde kingdom, with the principality of North Wales, devolved upon Cynetha * her nephew. † The sons of this prince, leaving their northern territories to the government of the eldest branch of their own family, retired to their dominions in North Wales; where their descendants supported the cause of freedom and of nature, until the royal British blood became extinct as to sovereignty in the person of David the last prince of Wales. ‡

The Cornwall family were derived from Bran-ap-Llyr, a duke of that province; who was afterwards chosen the king of Britain.§ Out of this princely family descended the illustrious names of Aurelius Ambrosius, Uthur Pendragon, Arthur and Constantine; a line of heroes, who successively, but with different fortunes, opposed the Saxon arms ||

* *Cynedda Wledig*, or the illustrious.

† Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 90.

‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 149. 162.

§ Ibid. p. 145, 146, 170. || Ibid.

The naval force of the kingdom in the preceeding period, during the reigns of Constantius and his son Constantine, had been the object of policy and of regular attention; by which means the coasts had in general been secured from invasion;* but as the Roman interest declined, the navy was suffered to decay; the Britons having paid no attention to this great object of national security.

At this period the Picts, acting in conjunction with the Scots, and the Saxons, invaded the Roman territories in Britain. The distraction and misery caused by this invasion were astonishingly great: for not
A. D. 364. confining their ravages to the sea coasts, as had hitherto been their custom, they spread wide their depredations through the interior parts of the country. They were instantly opposed by the Count of the Saxon shores; but after that officer

* Flores Historiarum, p. 91. Selden Mare Clausum, lib. II. cap. VI. 7. Campbell's Naval Hist. Brit. vol. I. p. 26.

had done all in his power to withstand their fury, he bravely fell, where he could not conquer. The next person that opposed them was the general of the Roman forces; who, having collected such a power as the urgency of the time would allow, marched against the enemy; but being drawn into an ambuscade, this general, likewise, experienced the same fate, These circumstances creating alarm, the emperor Valentinian sent Theodosius into Britain; and this officer, uniting military talents with great policy and address, soon put an end to the war, and reinstated the provinces in their former tranquillity.* On the return of Theodosius to Rome, he was attended to the sea shore by the acclamations of a grateful people. † A. D. 367.

This tranquil state of their affairs was soon interrupted by the ambition of a

* Langhori. Ant. Albion. p. 224.

† Appendix Post Bœdam, p. 671. Ammianus Marcellin. lib. XXVIII. p. 525.

A. D. 383. popular individual. For the Britons, engaging in the cause of Maximus * on his usurpation of the empire, rekindled the flames of war, and hastened their own ruin. This person had served a long time in Britain with great military reputation,† but the cause which of all others had been the means of riveting him in the affections of the natives, and of more closely uniting his interests with their own, was his marriage with Helena,‡ the daughter of Euda duke of Cornwall, § and who was afterwards elected to the sovereign dignity. ‖ In consequence of which, Maximus¶ drew to his standard the flower of the British youth; who along with the legionary soldiers were transported into Gaul.** His

* *Macsen Wledig.*

† Zosimus, lib. IV. p. 248.

‡ Born at Segonte.

§ Cornwall, called Cerniw by the Britons; by the Saxons Cornwall, or the Welch of Cornavia. See Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 18.

‖ Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 90. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 166, 169. Flores Historiarum, p. 105.

¶ Zosimus, lib. IV. p. 248.

** Flores Hist. p. 106.

endeavours were at first crowned with successs by an advantage he obtained over Gratian, one of the Roman emperors,* and by the expulsion of Valentinian the other emperor out of Italy; but his army was afterwards routed by Theodosius, and he himself, with his son Flavius, put to death, after having been, five years, in possession of the imperial dignity.† These princes fell victims to their ambition; and with them fell likewise the hopes, and splendid views of the Britons. The remains of this unfortunate army, for want of the means, it is probable, of returning into their own country, settled in ‡Armorica. § A. D. 388.

A season of weakness and misery ensued; but it was not every part of Britain which had been involved in the general

* Zosimus, p. 248. Bede's Eccl. Hist. p. 25.

† Zosimus, p. 266, 267.

‡ *Llydaw*, or along the water.

§ Girald. Cambrensis. lib. V. p. 41. The name is derived in the British from Ar-morica, or upon the sea. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 10.

A. D. 389. calamity. On the dissolution of the Roman power, the British governments had reverted to those Reguli who were descended from the ancient sovereigns. The most eminent of these princes, at this period, was Einion Urdd, the son of Cynetha, who resided, like his father, in his northern territories.* This prince united in his government the kingdom of the Strath-Clyde Britons, the province of North Wales, and, it is probable, likewise those parts of Cheshire and Lancashire lying upon the Irish channel.† The union of these dominions, under a vigorous administration, formed a force sufficiently powerful to repel the invaders, and to keep his own kingdom in general security, as long as it remained unbroken, by the custom of gavel-kind. In the course of this reign, however, the Irish Scots, under the command of Sirigi,‡ landed on Mona; and having defeated the natives, took possession of that island.§ On this invasion,

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 183. † Ibid. p. 146.
‡ Or, the *Rover*. § Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 146.

Einion Urdd sent his eldest son *Caswallon** to the relief of Mona,† who soon executed his orders, by routing the enemy at Holyhead, where their fleet was deposited, and slaying Sirigi in a personal encounter.‡

During the reign of Theodosius, his just and vigorous administration preserved in general the public tranquillity: but on the death of that prince, and in the minority of Honorius, a more general and formidable invasion took place. The Picts, the Irish Scots, and the Saxons, united their powers, and infested the southern coasts of Britain; they divided into different parties, and spread, with infinite fury, over the interior parts of the kingdom. This invasion, however, was soon checked, and the peace of the Island establish- A. D 393.
ed, under the conduct of Victorinus, an officer who had been sent into Britain by A. D. 395.
Stilico, who had, himself, directed, in the

* *Caswallon-law-hir*, or, the long-handed.
† Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 183.
‡ Ibid. p. 146.

minority of his master, the concerns of the Roman empire.* Among other marks of his attentions to the true interest of the island, he repaired the navy, which, for some years, preserved the coasts from being invaded.†

A calm interval having succeeded this stormy season, an event occurred the most important and decisive, and which gave so rude a shock to the centre of the Roman state, as to convulse the most distant parts of that wide and extensive empire.
A. D. 403. This was the invasion of Italy by *Alaric* the *Goth.* To sustain the central parts, the legionary troops in the provinces were recalled, and, of course, the greatest part of those which had been stationed in Britain were withdrawn into Italy.‡

In despair of receiving assistance from Rome, the Britons themselves elected se-

* Claudian de laud. Stilicon. cap. XI. Langhorni. Ant. Alb. p. 237.

† Secund. Paneg. de laud. Stilic. p. 516.

‡ Claudian de bello Getico, p. 593.

veral sovereigns, to take the direction of affairs, in such a perilous season.* The last of these princes, named Constantine, was raised to that dignity, on account of the popularity of his name; and though of mean rank, being no more than a common soldier, he was a person of spirit and of enterprize, and possessed a genius above his condition.† A. D. 408.

Elated with his early prosperity, Constantine extended his views to the continent; and, in order to support his claim to the empire, and to take advantage of the present favourable juncture, he passed over into Gaul with an army.‡ Honorius, being obliged to give way to the present emergency, agreed to receive him as his associate in the empire: § but that prince, having concluded a peace with the Goths, opposed the pretensions of Constantine, and finally took him prisoner, and put A. D. 409.

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 92. Zosimus, p. 371.

† Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 50.

‡ Ibid. p. 50. Zosimus, p. 371.

§ Zosimus, p. 359.

him to death.* The remainder of the Britons, who had followed the fortunes of the usurper, settled in Armorica, which
A. D. 410. at this time was erected into a kingdom, independent of Rome.†

The Britons, still more exposed than ever to invasions, applied to Honorius for assistance; but that emperor, himself sore-
A. D. 410. ly pressed by Alaric the Goth, left them to the management of their own affairs, and renounced the sovereignty of the island.‡

A short gleam of prosperity rising upon the Romans, in the reign of Valentinian
A. D. 423. the third, a legion was sent into Britain by Ætius, who commanded in Gaul, with no view of making any permanent settlement but only in pity to the immediate distresses of that country. When this legion had performed the necessary service,

* Polidore Virgil, p. 350.

† Zosimus, lib. VI. p. 376.

‡ Ibid. 376, 381.

it was recalled into Italy.* Before their departure, the Romans fortified the wall of Severus, and erected towers, for observation upon the sea coasts; they exhorted the Britons to inure themselves to war; and assured them that on their own virtue, and manly exertions, their future safety must depend.†

At this period, when the Romans bade a final adieu to Britain, the country lay exposed to the inroads of numerous enemies, after its native strength had been exhausted in support of foreign wars, its numbers farther wasted by famine and pestilence,‡ and its navy, that natural bulwark of its safety, had fallen into decay:§ and, under all these external dis-

* Zosimus, lib. VI. p. 376.

† Bede's Ecclesiastic. Hist. lib. I. cap. XII. p. 50. Gildas, p. 5. Gale's Scriptores.

‡ Verstegan, chap. V. p. 115, 116. Bede, lib. I, cap. XIV. p. 51, 52. Gildas, p. 7.

§ Berkley's Naval Hist. Britain, p. 43.

advantages, the people too were in want of that union so necessary in times of emergency; and the British princes themselves, instead of uniting to oppose the common danger, by concerted plans of operation, were only anxious to secure their separate interests.*

* Bede's Ecclesiastic. Hist. lib. I. cap. XII.

HISTORY

OF

WALES.

BOOK II.

CONTAINING A REVIEW OF THE BRITISH HISTORY, FROM THE FINAL RETREAT OF THE ROMANS, TO THAT PERIOD WHEN THE ANCIENT BRITONS WERE DRIVEN INTO WALES, CORNWALL, AND ARMORICA.

IN a state of weakness and confusion the Britons recovered their liberty, after having, in some degree, been dependant on the Roman empire four hundred and eighty years, from the first invasion under Julius Cæsar.* But they were no longer that rough, brave, or virtuous people which A. D. 430.

* Selden Mare Clausum, lib. II. cap. IX. p. 1310.

the Romans found them; they might be polished, it is true, by the Roman arts, but these had left them without valour or public spirit,—enervated, indolent, and dejected. They in general were elated at the *idea* of being free; but their minds were too much debased to form just conceptions of freedom, or to enjoy for the present, or render permanent, the full benefit of its invaluable fruits.

Amidst the confusion natural in such a situation, it is said that the Britons were struck with a sense of their true interests, and that they determined to establish a powerful navy, as the most solid means of securing the public tranquillity. This salutary measure, though undertaken at first with alacrity, was never carried into execution: the design, it is probable, might in some measure fail, through the natural levity of a people unacquainted with business, averse to labour, and unaccustomed to great attempts.*

* Berkeley's Naval Hist. Britain, p. 43, 44.

The sudden attack made by the Picts on the wall of Severus, allowed them, it is true, but little leisure to engage in naval designs; and those Britons, who defended the forts upon the wall, unacquainted with this kind of war, and not possessing the cool intrepidity necessary in such a situation, abandoned their stations; and, forsaking that part of the country, retreated to the south. Instead of the spoils, which had hitherto been the object of their inroads, the Picts determined to settle upon the territories which had been lately abandoned: * but this dangerous design was suspended, for the present, by a peace concluded with the Britons; that wretched people having purchased a temporary quiet for a considerable sum of money. By this treaty, the wall of Severus was to be the boundary between the two nations. The peace was however of no long duration, for the means which were employed to procure

* Bede's Ecclesiastic. Hist. lib. I. cap. XII. p. 50.

it were naturally the cause of its infraction; * and a war ensued more destructive in its consequence, than any in which the Britons had been engaged. In one battle alone they sustained the loss of fourteen thousand men; an irreparable injury in their weak situation. Reduced to extremity, they solicited peace of their conquerors, † and obtained one indeed, but upon very mortifying terms; for by the new treaty they were obliged to yield up the country which lies to the north of the
A. D. 438. Humber, and on which territory the Picts immediately made settlements. ‡

The Britons being thus despoiled of a great part of their territories, and sensible that every resistance of their own was vain, applied to the king of Armorica for assistance; who sent his brother Constantine, with a body of troops, into the island. § That prince having defeated the

* Rapin, vol. I. p. 24, 25.

† Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

§ Girald. Cambrensis, lib. VI. p. 43.

enemy, was promoted, in a public council, to the British throne.* But this supply only afforded the Britons an occasional relief; and still pressed by the increasing power of their enemies, they had recourse for the last time to the Romans, and supplicated aid from Ætius the *Præfect* of Gaul; who, with great valour, and a transient success, had suspended for some time the destiny of Rome. The British deputies carried to him the following letter of their countrymen, written in a strain of dishonourable lamentation: A. D. 443.

"To Ætius, thrice consul, the groans of
"the Britons. We know not which way
"to turn us. The *Barbarians* drive us to
"the sea, and the sea forces us back to
"the *Barbarians*; between which we have
"only the choice of two deaths, either to

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 184. Geoff. Monmouth. p. 171. English translation. Ranulph Higden, lib. IV. p. 219. Gale's Script. Math. West. Flores Hist. p. 212.

"be swallowed up by the waves, or butch-"ered by the sword." *

But Ætius, at this time engaged in opposing the formidable Atilla, was not in a situation to afford them relief. †

Dejected with this repulse, and still harassed by the inroads of the Picts and Irish Scots, the Britons were at length reduced to despair; deserted their habitations, abandoned tillage, and relinquishing the habits of social life, retreated to the woods and mountains; in which solitary wilds they gained a precarious subsistence by hunting.‡ To add another evil to their sufferings, a famine ensued, owing to incessant devastation and the neglect of cultivating their land. § To avoid this complicated misery, numbers

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XIII. p. 51. Gildas. cap. XVII. Girald. Cambrensis, lib. VI. p. 42.

† Bede, ibid.

‡ Verstegan, chap. V. p. 116.

§ Gildas, p. 6.

of the Britons yielded themselves up to the mercy of their enemies: others more brave, continued to oppose them from the places of their retreat; and the miserable remainder, indulging the last efforts of despair, fell to injure and despoil one another.*

The invaders themselves, unacquainted with the arts of agriculture, and perpetually harassed by the sudden incursions of the Britons, began to feel the pressure of that famine which they had occasioned; and were obliged to relinquish their possessions, and retire into their own country.† During this interval of peace, the Britons returned to their habitations, and to their usual employments in husbandry. Favourable seasons having seconded their labours, an astonishing plenty ensued; when, forgetful of their past misfortunes, and improvident for the future, they are said to have fallen into luxury, and into

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XIV. p. 51.
† Gildas, cap. XVII.

vices of every kind, the most atrocious; a circumstance, which not only marks the manners of the age, but also proves them to be unworthy of that freedom they had lately recovered. *

There is a point of depression as well as of exaltation, as has been observed by an acute philosophic spirit,† which in general limits the progress of human affairs; and from which they usually return, either by a slow or a rapid movement, to the opposite extreme. Though reduced to the lowest state of weakness and misery, the Britons, roused by the virtue of succeeding princes, recovered their native spirit; and, rising again into freedom and importance, asserted for many ages the rights of injured humanity.

A. D. 443. About this period, Caswallon, the prince of Cumbria, made choice of Mona ‡ for

* Bede, cap. XVII.

† Mr. Hume.

‡ The ruins of his palace were to be seen near Llan Elian in the Rev. Mr. Rowland's time.

his residence; and being the eldest branch of the *Cynethian family*, he had of course a pre-eminence in dignity; the other Cambrian princes paying him homage and obedience as their superior lord.* From this æra we may fix the date of a distinct sovereignty in North Wales.

Among the various evils accumulated upon the Britons, we may also add the miseries of religious dissension. It is equally deplorable as it is strange, that the Christian religion, so well adapted to soften and to meliorate the human heart, should, by a fatal perversion, be made the means of destroying the mildness of its spirit, and of injuring its purity; by calling into action the malignant and angry passions, and by confining the natural freedom of the mind, within the narrow limits prescribed to it by prejudice and the pride of opinion. The heresy of the

* Rowland, p. 146, 147, 148.

Pelagians had, at this time, spread in the Christian church; and the disputes which it produced were carried on with much animosity and rancour; evils, which have always arisen from the passions whenever they mingle in theological controversy.*

To remedy these evils, and to reduce to one standard religious opinions, the British clergy applied for assistance to a Gallican council; which deputed St. Germain, attended by another bishop of the
A. D. 447. name of Lupus, upon that mission.† The former prelate, who was a man of learning and piety, and seems to have possessed a solid and extensive genius, having for the present given a check to the Pelagian innovations, fixed his residence in Cambria; where, it is probable, that at this early period, many of its inhabitants still re-

* Matt. Westm. p. 114.

† Ibid. Bede's Eccl. His. lib. I. cap. XVII. p. 54. Ran. Higden's Polychron. lib. V. p. 223.

mained in ignorance, and had scarcely any knowledge of Christianity.*

During the conversion of the Britons in Cambria, and while St. Germain was introducing learning, with some degree of order, into the church, the Saxons joined in confederacy with the Picts, and invaded that part of the country. At this juncture many Britons were assembled to be instructed by St. Germain in the principles of Christianity, and to receive baptism at his hands, on the festival of Easter. Supported by this multitude, who were fired with religious enthusiasm, St Germain calmly waited the approach of the enemy, at a place called *Maes-Garmon*, near Mold, in Flintshire; and at the moment when the Saxons were rushing to the attack, he ordered the Britons to call aloud, three times, *Allelujah.* The sound having increased by the reverberation of the adjacent mountains, threw the Saxons into so great a

* Constantius' Life of St. Germain.

panic, that they were soon routed.* We easily conceive that a superstitious people would impute this singular victory to the extraordinary interposition of the Almighty, and that they esteemed their leader, like Gideon, to be armed with celestial power. But the mind, at the present period, not seeing objects through the medium of either superstition or enthusiasm, will conclude this event to have arisen out of natural causes, always under the direction of Divine Providence. The Saxons, it is possible, from the nature of the outcry, might suspect an ambush, or that the number of the Britons was increased: besides, the mind of man, in an uncultivated state, is liable to fears, the most sudden, absurd, and contagious. Having thus preserved the public tranquility from foreign enemies, and, by civil and religious regulations, having secured, in some measure, the peace of the country, St. Germain attempted, before

* Bede's Eccles. Hist. lib. I. cap. XX. p. 57. Langhorni. Ant. Albionenses, p. 259.

his departure, to establish a naval force, assuring the Britons, that it must be upon their fleets alone they could rationally depend for their future security.*

Constantine, the king of Britain, was, at this time, murdered, by the treachery of a Pict, while he was engaged in the pleasures of the chace. His son Constans, though a monk, was raised to the throne, A. D. 448. through the machinations of Vortigern† his cousin, in hopes of directing the government of a prince, who, having been bred in the recesses of a cloister, was, of course, uninstructed in the management of public affairs, and in the laws of his kingdom.‡ There was something bold in the genius of Vortigern. He possessed

* Berkeley's Naval Hist. Britain, p. 44.

† *Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenau*, lord of *Gwent Erging* and *Euas*, in South Wales. L. Morris.

‡ Geoff. Monmouth, p. 173. Rowland, p. 169, 184. Ranulph. Higden, lib. IV. p. 219. Gale's Script. Math. Westm. Flores Hist. p. 113.

qualities which usually decide in great and turbulent scenes; but he was led by them into a series of crimes, which have marked his life with misfortune, and his character with infamy.

As soon as Vortigern had taken the reins of government into his hands, he disdained to act a secondary part in its affairs; but, allured by the prospect of the crown, he determined to reach that point of his ambition by the murder of his sovereign.* In pursuance of this design, the king's guards, who had been recommended by Vortigern himself, and were instigated by rewards, and his artful suggestions, entered the prince's bedchamber, and, having cut off his head, carried it bleeding to the regent. Vortigern, however delighted with the spectacle, feigned the utmost astonishment and horror, wept over the ghastly visage, and, by a master-stroke of policy, as if

* Jo. Ross. Ant. War. p. 55. Math. Westmin. Flores Hist. p. 113.

affected with honest indignation, commanded the heads of the assassins to be struck off.* The singular address of Vortigern, in the conduct of this affair, might cause the death of Constans, in some degree, to remain enveloped in uncertainty and darkness. It removed, however, the obstacle to his ambition, and he immediately ascended the throne;† but whether by his own usurpation, or that he was called to the vacant dignity by the voice of the British states, is a point which remains undecided. A. D. 448.

Here let us pause a moment over an *epoch* distinguished in the British annals, when the Saxons were invited into Britain, to be the guardians of its safety, and point out the probable causes of a measure so delusive and fatal. The rapid changes of several princes from the sceptre

* Polychronicon, lib. IV. p. 221, in Gale's Scriptores. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 178. Evan's Mirror of past Ages, in Welsh, p. 95.

† Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 184.

to the grave, had shewn the precarious tenure under which the British sovereigns had held their power. The fear, likewise, of falling a sacrifice to the justice of his country, might be a powerful motive with Vortigern, to unite his cause with the ambitious views of the Saxons, whose number and valour might protect him from danger, and support their mutual interests. Superadded to these motives of a personal nature, the public safety, at this time threatened with an invasion of the Picts and Scots, served Vortigern as a plausible pretext to convene the states of the kingdom, and to propose, in that assembly, the necessity of such an alliance.* Nothing could so strongly mark the fear and distraction, which, at this time, influenced the general council, as adopting so hastily, a measure repugnant to every principle of sound policy. The succeed-

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XIV. p. 51, 52. Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 55. Math. Westm. Flores Historiarum, p. 115. Gildas, cap. XXIII. p. 7. Gale's edit.

ing history of the Saxon wars, replete with human misery, and the ruin of the British empire, the effect of this day's counsels, are melancholy lessons to mankind, that a people, who have not themselves the virtue to defend their country, are not likely, by adventitious aid, to preserve its freedom.

A weak credulity, and a temper hasty and impetuous, were the leading qualities of the Britons, which frequently excited them to resolutions the most precipitate and ill-founded. These defects, which have been ruinous to their liberties, in every period of their annals, laid them open to the machinations, and interested views, of this crafty usurper; and it was an easy matter for Vortigern, by sounding the alarm of danger, to obtain the consent of the British states, that deputies should be immediately dispatched, to solicit aid of the Saxons.* Some nobler spirits, en-

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XIV. p. 52. Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 55.

dued with greater strength of discernment, saw the fatal tendency of the measure, and exerted their utmost efforts to oppose the current of this general infatuation. But the evil genius of Britain prevailed; and deputies were sent to the Saxons, to solicit their assistance against the common enemy, the Picts and the Scots.*

The various tribes of the Saxons,† at this period, were governed in the same manner as the Celtic nations. An assembly, composed of twelve of the most eminent chieftains, formed the great council of the nation, and, during peace, directed the public administration; but, in times of war, one person of this body, pre-eminent in valour and other talents for command, was chosen, by the common suffrages, to take upon him the conduct of the state.‡ At this period, Hengist and

* Evan's Mirror of past Ages, written in Welsh.

† So called, from using military weapons that were in the shape of a *scythe*, and called in their language *seaxes*. Verstegan, chap. I. p. 21, 22.

‡ Verstegan, chap. III. p. 62.

Horsa were princes of great distinction. They were the descendants of Woden,* the founder of the nation, and regarded by the Saxons as the deity who presided in war, † agreeably to the custom of the early ages, of paying divine honours to any distinguished individual, who had been the instrument of glory or of utility to his country.

When the British deputies appeared before the assembly of the Saxon states, they opened the nature of their commission, and solicited assistance.‡ Struck with this favourable opportunity of dis-

* From Woden is derived Wednesday, being the day dedicated to the honour of that Saxon deity. Friday likewise is derived from the Saxon goddess Fria, being the day dedicated to her worship; and in the same manner, every other day in the week, has taken its derivation from the Saxon deities. See Verstegan, cap. III. p. 69—77. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53. Samme's British Ant. 352.

† Ran. Higden Polychron. Gale's Script. lib. V. p. 222.

‡ Gildas, p. 7.

playing their valour, and of gratifying their avidity, and probably discerning the consequent advantages, the Saxons agreed to send the Britons immediate aid; and a large body of troops was embarked under the command of Hengist and Horsa.* The former of these warriors, by his valour and abilities, was every way qualified to support the expectations of his country. On the character of Horsa, history is silent; except that, along with his brother, he had served in the Roman armies under Valentinian the third. †

When the deputies returned into Britain, and reported the success of their embassy, there was great rejoicing in the court of Vortigern.‡ Soon after their arrival, the Saxon auxiliaries landed at Ebsfleete in the island of Thanet; the place which, by previous agreement had

A. D. 449.

* Gildas, cap. XXIII. p. 7. Gale's edit. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53.

† Verstegan, chap. V. p. 118.

‡ Evans' Mirrour, in Welsh, p. 98.

been allotted for their residence.* Under the influence of those fears which ever agitate guilty minds, it is natural to suppose, that the arrival of his new allies, would be a matter of pleasure and comfort to the British king † To shew them greater honour, he repaired in person to meet the Saxons, and waited their landing on the sea shore; he there received them with extraordinary caresses, entertained them with feasts several days; and after he had settled their stipulated pay, to avoid the causes of future discontents, he led them against the Picts and Scots, ‡ who at this time had penetrated as far as Stamford § That they might give an early impression of their valour, Hengist placed the Saxons in the front, as the station of danger; and the Britons formed

* Verstegan, chap. V. p. 117. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 52. Saxon Chron, by Gibson, p. 12.

† Verstegan, chap. V. p. 122.

‡ Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 13. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 122.

§ Gale's Script. Ranulph Higden Polychron. lib V. p. 222.

the rear of the army. In this situation, they waited the attack of the enemy; who began the assault, as was usually their custom, by a discharge of lances and darts; which made no impression upon the Saxons, who were accustomed to fight in a closer order, with long swords and battle axes. At length, after an engagement obstinately disputed and bloody, the Picts and Scots were entirely defeated.* By this victory the Saxon princes obtained a high reputation for valour and military conduct. † A few subsequent efforts, which were always unprosperous, obliged the Picts and Scots to relinquish their conquests, and to retreat into their own country. If, upon this fortunate turn in their affairs, the Britons had united under a sovereign of ability and virtue; had enforced the immediate departure of the Saxons, at a time when they were few in number, and had also established a naval

* Verstegan, chap. V. p. 122. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 52. Gale's Scriptores, ibid.

† Verstegan, cap. V. p. 122.

force; they might have preserved the public tranquillity, and have secured, for a time at least, the national independence.

Instead of these decisive and politic measures, a ruinous and irreparable one ensued: for Hengist, whose penetrating mind had seen into the designs and critical situation of Vortigern; who had observed the luxury, the negligence, and effeminacy of the Britons; and had noticed the richness of their country, compared with his own; began at this time to extend his views towards a permanent settlement in it. With this design, he invited a fresh body of his countrymen to assist in the enterprize, and to partake in the fruits of the conquests which he meditated.* He likewise represented to the king the necessity of being possessed of some fortified place, as a security for his troops, and as a repository of their spoils; and accordingly desired that he might

* Bede's Eccl. Hist. lib. I. cap. XV. p. 52. Saxon Chron. p. 12. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 122.

erect such a fortress The request of Hengist was at first refused by Vortigern, through fear that it might excite a jealousy among the Britons; however, at length he accomplished his design, by means of an artifice, which, if it be true, marked the exceeding simplicity of the times.*

Latter End of A. D. 450. Induced by the flattering description which Hengist had given of Britain, a large body of Saxons came over;† and among these was the daughter of that prince, the beautiful Rowenna.‡ The arrival of these troops was seen with a jealous eye by many of the Britons, who were justly alarmed at the consequences

* Fabian, p. 71. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 185. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 122. Hengist only desired of Vortigern as much land as the hide of an ox would surround. This request being agreed to, the artful Saxon (it is said) cut the hide into small thongs, with which he encompassed a space of ground sufficient to erect a fort.

† Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 52.

‡ Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 55. Wm. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9.

of introducing into the country so great a number of foreigners.* But Vortigern, the presiding demon in the fate of Britain, and whose secret machinations, it is probable, had introduced this reinforcement, either despised the remonstrance of his subjects,† or had the address to silence their fears, and to persuade them of the necessity of such a measure, on the plausible pretext that the first body of Saxons, from their late losses, would be insufficient to protect them from their enemies.

The intercourse subsisting between Hengist and the British king, had given him the opportunity of observing the constitutional character of that monarch; and on this basis he hoped to form an alliance, which should serve as a cement to their common interests, and should give solidity to his own future designs. Having frequently acknowledged his obligations to

* Math. Westm. p. 118.

† Ibid.

‡ Evan's Mirrour, p. 99.

Vortigern, he requested the honour of his company to a feast, at the castle he had lately erected; that by every entertainment in his power, he might express his respect and gratitude. * Vortigern accepted the invitation to a *supper*, and the carousal was highly magnificent. In the height of their festivity, when the wine had circulated, and the mind was open to no other impression than pleasure; the fair Rowenna appeared in the hall, magnificently drest, and holding a gold cup in her hand which was full of wine. Having gracefully presented herself upon one knee before the king, she thus addressed him in her own language, "*Waes heal hlaford* "*Cyning*, or, Be of health lord king." Agreeably surprised with the sudden appearance of a beautiful lady kneeling before him, the king demanded of his chamberlain, who was the interpreter, the nature of her suit.† He was informed that

* Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 56. Wm. Malmsbury, p. 9. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 126.

† Jo. Ross. Ant. Warw. Hist. Reg. Angl. p. 56. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 127,

the princes Rowenna accosted him after the manner of her country; where it was usual at carousals, for any one who shall drink to another, to cry *washeil;* the person to whom he thus speaks shall answer, *Drynk-heil;* then he who first cried *washeil,* drinks, and presents him with the cup. While the interpreter was explaining to Vortigern the nature of this gothic festivity, that prince smiled upon Rowenna, and said to her in the Saxon language, "*Drynk heil,* or, *drink the health.*" * Upon this the princess drank a little out of the cup, and presented it gracefully to the king, who then, agreeably to the custom, gave her a salute. She immediately retired, with the profoundest respect, out of the king's presence.† The uncommon beauty of the Saxon princess, the gracefulness of her manners, and the touching singularity of the action, impressed upon him when he was heated with wine, en-

* Verstegan, chap. V. p. 127.

† Fabian, p. 72. Geoffry Monmouth, p. 187.

tirely fascinated the soul of Vortigern; and left no traces of any other impressions in his mind, than those of love and desire. To increase still more this amorous frenzy, many impediments were artfully thrown by Hengist in the way of his passion.* But the infatuated monarch, inflamed with desire, disregarded every obstacle, which the dictates of honour, prudence, and religion had opposed to his wishes. He removed the chief impediment by divorcing his wife, who had borne him three sons; † and having married the Saxon princess, he invested Hengist with the sovereignty of Kent, violently wresting that territory from its original proprietor; he likewise put him in possession of the three counties of Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex. ‡

* William Malmsbury, p. 9.

† Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 222. Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 56. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 127. Warton's English Poetry, from Geoff. Monmouth.

‡ Verstegan, cap. V. p. 128. William Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9.

The marriage of Vortigern, so opposite to the ideas of a superstitious age, his late munificence to Hengist, so contrary to justice, with his open partiality for the Saxons, had spread in every place indignation and alarm.* But while the Britons employed themselves only in complaints and unavailing discontent, the politic Hengist, sensible that guilt had made the king subservient, and of consequence a dupe, to his designs, induced him to give his consent for a further reinforcement of Saxons.† And, to promote this design, he infused into his mind the danger of his situation, from the revolt of his subjects, universally disaffected, and from the probable design of Ambrosius,‡ of asserting his right to the crown, and of revenging the murder of his brother Constans.§ In consequence of this, a large body of

* Math. West. p. 117. Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 59. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 128.

† Fabian, p. 72.

‡ *Emrys Wledig*, the son of the British king Constantine, who, after his brother's death, retired into Armorica for protection.

§ Math. West. p. 117.

A. D. 452. Saxons arrived, under the command of Abisa, the brother of Hengist, and of his son Octa.* These leaders landed in the islands of the Orcades; and, having subdued them, and obliged the Picts to evacuate the Northumbrian territory, they settled in the country which had been abandoned.† The Saxons at first only occupied the lands upon the eastern shore, which lie to the north of the Tyne; they afterwards advanced by slow degrees to the south, and dispossessed the Britons of the country as far as the Humber.‡

A friendship, cemented by principles so interested and base, as those which subsisted in the minds of Hengist and Vortigern, must be of necessity precarious, and was not likely to be of longer duration than the motives which formed the alliance. On the accession of strength

* W. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9. Verstegan, cap. V. p. 128. Saxon Chron. p. 12. Nennius, cap. XXXVII. Bertram's edition.

† W. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9. Nennius, cap. XXXVII.

‡ Rapin, vol. I. p. 32.

which he received by the arrival of so considerable a force, Hengist immediately threw off the mask: he no longer paid any respect to the person of Vortigern; and, under the pretence of keeping up the number of his forces, he continually increased them by fresh * supplies, which were sent him from the continent, without the knowledge, and even without deigning to ask the permission, of the king. When the first body of Saxons came into Britain, they had a stipulated pay allowed them,† which, it is probable, consisted both of money and provisions, beside the island of Thanet, which had been allotted for their residence.‡ The first condition not having been duly performed,§ or perhaps under that pretext, Hengist at this time demanded the pay or provisions for the whole number of Saxons in his army; and insolently threatened, in case of refusal, that they would do themselves jus-

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XV.

† Math. Westm. p. 116.

‡ W. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9.

§ Verstegan, chap. V. p. 128.

tice by the force of arms. This demand, however oppressive, was instantly complied with, to take from the Saxons every plausible ground of contention. Still rising in their demands, from the late concession, their hostile designs appeared without disguise, and were discovered to be of the most dangerous tendency.* In this moment of danger, when the Britons seemed destitute of every manly and virtuous exertion, they suddenly rose into a degree of wisdom and public spirit, which for a time gave a fortunate turn to their affairs.

The folly and the crimes of Vortigern had rendered him the object of universal detestation. In consequence of which, he was deposed from the throne by a general
A. D. 464. assembly of the British states, and the crown was given to his eldest son Vortimer †

* Gildas, p. 8. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53. Verstegan, cap. V. p. 128.

† *Gwrthefyr Fendigaid.* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 184. Verstegan, cap. V. p. 128. Fabian's Chron. p. 73. Math. Westm. p. 118.

The talents of this prince, exercised in a vigorous opposition to the Saxons, fully justified the choice of his country. The first measures of his reign were prudent and decisive. He proposed to the Saxons that they might retire unmolested out of Britain; he separated his own ships from theirs; and having protected his fleet with a large body of his troops, he posted the remainder of his army in a strong situation.* Alarmed at this formidable appearance and spirited activity of Vortimer, the Saxons applied to the Picts and Scots, to join in alliance against the common enemy.† These people readily agreed to the invitation; and, with the Saxons already stationed in those parts, formed a considerable force in the north. In the mean time, that a junction might not be formed of the two armies, Vortimer suddenly attacked the Saxons on their own ground in Kent, under the command of Hengist and Horsa. This battle was fought

* Berkeley's Naval Hist. p. 49.

† Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53. Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 57. Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 222.

at Ailsford, and disputed with great obstinacy; but was at length decided in favour of the Britons.* Amidst the slaughter of the day, Horsa, and Cartigern † the younger brother of Vortimer, fell by each other's sword. ‡ The Britons, little accustomed to the smiles of fortune, were animated, by this victory, to pursue their success; and in several battles which followed, they seem in general to have had the advantage. § The last action is said to have been so decisive, that the Saxons were forced to retreat into the island of Thanet. ‖ The same good fortune, likewise, favoured their arms in the north, against the combined forces of the Picts, and the Saxons under Octa.¶ Dispirited by so many defeats upon land, Hengist, changing his plan of operation, deter-

* Math. Westm. p. 119. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 129.

† *Cyndeyrn.*

‡ Fabian, p. 75.

§ Ranulph Higden, lib. V. p. 223. Gale's Scriptores.

‖ Fabian, p. 76. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 129.

¶ Berkeley's Naval Hist. Eng. p. 49.

mined that the dispute should be decided at sea; and as soon as his ships were manned with the choicest of his soldiers, he sailed in pursuit of the British fleet. Vortimer, equal to every emergency, and whose activity and valour had infused a spirit into his soldiers, was prepared to receive him, though inferior to the Saxon prince in the number and size of his vessels. In this action, contending for the fate of Britain on its proper element, Vortimer gained the advantage, took several of the enemy's ships, and entirely dispersed their fleet.* Pursuing his good fortune, he renewed his attacks upon land, and drove the Saxons into the island of Thanet; and at length obliged Hengist with his troops, who on this occasion deserted their women and children, to retire into Germany, in order to procure farther supplies.† After this event, the British prince collected his fleet, which had been

* Berkeley's Naval Hist. England. p. 49.

† Grafton's Chr. p. 89. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 129. Math. Westm. Flores Hist. p. 119.

dispersed in the late action; and his army was soon reinforced by numbers who crowded to his standard on account of his brilliant success.*

The prosperity, which had just begun to dawn upon Britain, was soon clouded by the resentment and ambition of a woman. Since the disgrace of Vortigern, that monarch had been imprisoned in the city of Chester; † and during his confinement had behaved with general propriety, having given his son wise and faithful counsels, and having paid him a respectful obedience. This decent or politic conduct, and the recollection of the great qualities which he really possessed, or perhaps the natural fickleness of the people, formed a party in his favour, and drew him out of that general odium in which he had been for some time immersed.†

* Berkeley's Naval History, p. 49.

† *Caer Lleon ar Ddyfrdwy.*

‡ Fabian, p, 76.

In this state of affairs, Rowenna, incited by revenge, and anxious to regain the dignity she had lost, meditated the murder of Vortimer. For this purpose, she engaged in her service by the promises of a great reward a young man, who, disguised in the habit of a gardener, it is said, appeared before the king one morning, while taking the air in his garden; and presented him with a nosegay of flowers, which was sprinkled with poison.* As soon as the king was sensible of its effects, and that his death was inevitable, he called into his presence the British nobility; exhorted them to a manly defence of their country, and required, that after his death they should erect a sepulchre on the sea shore, and fix it in the port where the Saxons usually landed,† deluded by the vain

* Evan's Mirror, p. 106, from an old Manuscript. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 129. Fabian, p. 76. Math. Westm. p. 120. Flores Historiarum. These writers all agree that he was poisoned.

† Geoff. Monmouth, p. 192.

imagination, that the image and relics of a dead warrior, would infuse the same terror, which he himself had inspired when alive. The British nobles, however, not adopting the idle delusion of their master, or, what is more probable, negligent of

A. D. 468. his commands, interred him in * London.†

The levity, which we have frequently noticed as a natural defect in the British character, appears at this juncture to have influenced the national council. For in that assembly, by an unaccountable caprice, Vortigern was re-elected to the sovereign dignity; ‡ the same man who a few years before had been solemnly deposed from the throne, as a traitor to his country.

Thus far the machinations of Rowenna

* *Caer Ludd.*

† Math. Westm. p. 120. Geoff. Monm. p. 192.

‡ Fabian, p. 76. Geoffry Monmouth. p. 193. Gale's Script. Polychron. R. Higden, p. 222. Verstegan, chap. V, p. 229.

had succeeded to her wishes. She had at length attained to her former grandeur by wading through the blood of her son-in-law; and what is but too probable, with the connivance of her infatuated husband. For this prince, at the instigation of his wife, sent intelligence of the late events into Germany, and desired that Hengist her father would come into Britain, privately, and with a small train; lest, if he came over with a larger force, he should be opposed by the united power of the Britons.* When Hengist acquainted his followers with this intelligence, and proposed to them the conquest of Britain, they expressed great reluctance to the enterprize, on account of its uncertainty and danger; as they had found by experience, that the Britons were brave when properly roused and led into action. Hengist had the address to remove these impressions, and to raise the hopes of his countrymen; by telling them, that though

* Math. Westm. p. 120.

the Britons were brave, they were nevertheless inferior to themselves in policy, and in the stratagems of war.*

Thus allured by the flattering assurances of Hengist, four thousand Saxons embarked under his command.† When the Saxons approached the British coast, they found that the inhabitants, under the command of Vortigern, appeared fully determined to oppose their landing.‡ Intelligence of this being privately sent by Rowenna to her father, the Saxon prince had recourse to an expedient suggested by his wily and fertile imagination; as well as from a knowledge of the people with whom he had to act. In this artifice, the weakness or the treachery of Vortigern was employed. Hengist sent to assure that monarch, that his purpose in coming into Britain was not to offer any violence to the kingdom; but only to make a

* Evan's Mirror, p. 107.

† Math. Westm. p. 120. Verstegan, cap. V. p. 129.

‡ Ibid. p. 120. Ibid. p. 130.

vigorous opposition against his son Vortimer, whom he artfully pretended to believe was yet alive.* It was likewise proposed by Hengist, that an interview should take place between them, and that each of the princes should meet at the place appointed, attended by the most eminent of his train; † and in order to banish every idea of hostile intention, it was artfully suggested by the Saxon chief, that both parties should appear without their arms. The proposal was agreed to by the king; the time of meeting was fixed for the May following; and the place appointed for the interview was probably at Stonehenge ‡ upon Salisbury plains.§

In the mean time, Hengist, having assembled the leaders in his army, laid open to them his design; ‖ that under the colour

* Math. Westm. p. 120.

† Verstegan, cap. V. p. 130.

‡ *Caer Gawr.*

§ *Maes Mawr.* Math. Westm. p. 130. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 130.

‖ Evan's Mirror, p. 109.

of meeting the Britons for the purposes of peace, and of establishing a lasting alliance, he intended to massacre those chieftains who should attend Vortigern to the interview;* that by striking so decisive a blow, he might cut the sinews of future resistance. At the same time he gave orders, that his train who attended the carousal, should carry knives concealed in their sleeves; that when the signal was given, each of them should instantly stab the person who sat upon his left hand; † and he closed his infernal command by requiring them to "behave like men, and to shew no mercy ‡ to any person but to the king."

Notwithstanding the many proofs which the Saxons had given of their perfidy, the Britons, with a degree of credulity peculiar to themselves, fell into the snare, and came unarmed to the place appointed for

* Fabian, p. 77.
† Math. Westm. p. 120.
‡ Fabian, p. 77.

the interview;* where, by the contrivance of Hengist, they were placed with his train alternately at the tables, under the pretence of confidence, and of a friendly intercourse with each other.† When the festivity was at the height, and probably in the unguarded moments of intoxication, Hengist gave the signal which had been agreed on, *Hem cowr seaxes*, or, take your *seaxes*. At that instant, every Saxon drew out his knife, and plunged it into the bosom of the person who sat next to him. Above three hundred of the British nobility, the most eminent for their talents in the council or in the field, perished in this bloody carousal.‡ Vortigern was spared in the general carnage, though detained a prisoner by Hengist;§ probably

A. D. 472.

* Math. Westm. p. 120.

† Evan's Mirror, p. 109.

‡ Math. Westm. p. 120. W. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 9. Gale's Script. Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 222. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 130. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 13. These writers differ respecting the number slain.

§ Verstegan, chap. V. p. 131. W. Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 10. R. Higden, lib. V, p. 223. Fabian, p. 77.

with no other design than as a cover to a subsequent act of the British king, which carries with it a strong appearance of baseness ; for in order to obtain his liberty, he made an assignment to the Saxon prince of the present counties of Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex, and also confirmed him in the possession of his former territories.*

The news of this massacre, we may easily suppose, spread among the Britons the utmost astonishment and horror, which was probably heightened by a deep suspicion of their sovereign having acted a secondary part in a scene so cruel and perfidious. The evident partiality which Vortigern had shewn to the Saxons,† and his general flagitious conduct,‡ had, by this time, rendered him almost universally detested. § Covered with confusion and reproach, he withdrew into the wilds of

* Nennius, cap. XLVII. Rapin, vol. I. p. 31.
† Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 37.
‡ Math. Westm. p. 128.
§ Ibid. p. 121.

Caernarvonshire:* but though that solitary desert might conceal him from his injured country, it could not protect him from the consciousness of guilt, or of folly, in the most pernicious extreme.

The Britons having been deceived by the late appearance of friendship, and neglecting also to provide against future contingencies, had dismissed those forces, which, under Vortimer their late prince, had gained so many victories, and had nearly established their freedom. At this juncture, it is said, they had only seven thousand men in arms, who were fit for service,† which was by no means a force equal to the great power of the Saxons, rendered now more fierce, from a sense of their late barbarity. That event was only the prelude to a scene of more extensive misery; for the Saxons, at this time, ravaged the whole country, from the

* Henry Huntingdon, lib. II. p. 310, in Script. post Bœdam.

† Evan's Mirror, p. 110.

western to the eastern sea.* In the course of their ravages, private dwellings and public edifices were levelled with the ground; the common people were put to death without mercy; even venerable prelates shared the same fate; and the priests themselves were slain at the altar, performing the sacred duties of their office.† The bitter animosity, which usually attends difference in religion, increased the natural fierceness of a barbarous people. From this scene of misery, many of the Britons having fled for shelter into the mountains or woods, were pursued by the enemy, and slain; others retired into foreign countries, probably to Armorica, their usual asylum in distress; and numbers of them, driven to the last extreme of wretchedness, gave themselves up to slavery.‡

Vortigern having deserted, or, what is more probable, having been deposed from

* Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53.

† Gildas, p. 8.

‡ Gildas, p. 8. Bede, lib. I. cap. XV. p. 53.

the throne, the Britons turned their eyes to Ambrosius,* of the house of Cornwall, and the brother of Constans, their late sovereign, who had been murdered by Vortigern. This prince, and his brother Uthur Pendragon, had retired, from the tyranny of that usurper, to their uncle, the king of Armorica.† By the assistance of that prince, Aurelius Ambrosius, with his brother, landed in Britain, at the head of a large body of forces, and was instantly raised to the throne.‡ This prince, influenced by motives of a private and of a public nature, detesting Vortigern, as the murderer of his brother, and as a traitor to his country, and afraid of the cabals § of a powerful party in his favour, determined, in his first enterprize, to free himself from a dangerous rival. By a rapid movement, he came so suddenly upon Vortigern, that the British A. D. 481.

* Gildas, p. 9. Bede, lib. I. cap. XVI. p. 53.

† Math. Westm. p. 113.

‡ Math. Westm. p. 128. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 184.

§ Fabian, p. 72.

king had scarcely time to fly to his retreat in North Wales. To this place he was pursued by Ambrosius, and his castle* invested, which was burned to the ground, either by accident, or by the means employed in the siege.† And here, in his old age, and after a turbulent reign
A. D 481. of thirty-three years, he perished in the flames,‡ together with all his women, one of whom, it is said, was his own daughter,§ who lived with him in a state of incest.|| The odium which pursued the memory of Vortigern, mingling with the superstition of the age, hath imputed his death to the immediate interposition of heaven.

* *Castell Gwrtheyrnion,* on the river Wye, in *Arwystly.*

† Math. Westm. p. 329. Geoffry Monmouth, p. 231.

‡ Nennius, cap. XLVIII. Verstegan, cap. V. p. 132.

§ Nennius, cap. XXXVIII.

|| Fabian, p. 79. This prince had by his first wife three sons, Vortimer, Cartigern, and Pascens; and he had one son named Faustus, it is said, by his own daughter.

In the mean time, many of those Britons who inhabited the country possessed by Hengist, in abhorrence of the cruel and perfidious scene he had lately acted at Stonehenge, fled into other provinces, and, by their desertion, left his territories in a great measure without people or cultivation.* To remedy this evil, and to oppose the popular administration and spirited conduct of Ambrosius, Hengist invited over a fresh body of Saxons, offering them a part of his dominions for their residence. In consequence of this offer, a chieftain, named Ella, arrived with a body of forces, and landed on the coast of Sussex; and, after a contest of several years, established his followers in that country. The name of Sussex was given to this territory, on account of its being the residence of the South Saxons.† This supply having given stability to his new dominions, Hengist planted a colony to

* Rapin Hist. Eng. vol. I. p. 35.

† Gale's Scriptores. Ran. Higden, lib.V. p. 224. Math. Westm. p. 130. Henry Huntingdon, lib. II. p. 311. Script. post Bœdam. Saxon Chr. p. 14.

the east of his own settlement in Kent, which took the name of Essex, from the East Saxons: he likewise placed another in that district which lies between Sussex and Essex, and which was from thence called Middlesex, or the Middle Saxons.*

A. D. 481.

The death of his rival seated Ambrosius more firmly on the throne. So very popular was the name of this prince in Britain, that numbers crowded to fight under his standard.† The Britons of Cambria likewise united in the common cause, and joined his army.‡ With this force he marched against the Saxons in the country beyond the Humber, and entirely defeated them. Hengist their leader was taken prisoner. The Saxon prince being brought into the presence of Ambrosius, was instantly beheaded,§ as an act of justice which was due to his desolated

* Rapin, vol. I. p. 35.

† Math. Westm. p. 128.

‡ Evan's Mirror, p. 116.

§ Math. Westm. p. 131, 132. Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 223. Gale's Script.

country, and to the massacre at Stonehenge; the army likewise threw a heap of stones over his grave, as a memorial of his infamy, and as a monument of their indignation.* The British prince then laid siege to the city of York, in which place, Octa the son of Hengist, and Esca his brother, had taken refuge: but these leaders were soon obliged to surrender, upon condition that they and the Saxon soldiers should retire into the country near Scotland.† After this event, Ambrosius turned his arms against Ella the king of the South Saxons, over whose forces it appears that at first he gained some advantage.‡ He then recovered London, Winchester, and Salisbury,§ all which cities had been seized by the Saxons, after the massacre at Stonehenge.‖

On the disgrace or the death of Vorti-

* Geoff. Monmouth, p. 240. Sammes's Ant. Brit. p. 474.

† Math. Westm. p. 132.

‡ Math. Westm. p. 134.

§ Geoff. Monmouth, cap. IX. p. 243.

‖ Math. Westm. p. 120.

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gern, his third son, named Pascen, retired into Germany, with a view to induce the Saxons to support his claim upon the crown, and to join the common cause, in the conquest of Britain. Having had the address to procure a body of troops, he landed upon the coast of Scotland, to join the Saxons who had lately been permitted by Ambrosius to settle in that country.* This prince, receiving intelligence of the invasion, instantly marched to oppose the son of Vortigern, whose army he entirely routed. On this defeat, Pascen sailed over into Ireland, to procure assistance from a king of that country: by this prince he was cordially received, and supplied with a body of seven thousand men. With this reinforcement he landed at Milford Haven,† and from thence ravaged the city of St. David, ‡ in the present county of Pembroke, and all the country around it.

At this time, Ambrosius lay sick in the

* Math. Westm. p. 135. † *Aberdaugleddau.*
‡ Ibid. Fabian, p. 81.

city of *Winchester.† The news of his sickness being brought to Pascen, he determined to derive some advantage from so favourable an incident, and instantly suggested the design of murdering the king. There was at that time in his train a Saxon named Eppa, who was an artful person, and of great address: he had likewise some knowledge of the British language, and was acquainted with physic. This man was chosen as a proper instrument for his purpose; and, that he might more easily gain access to the king, appeared in the characters of a priest and a physician.‡ Under favour of this disguise, Eppa was introduced into the palace of Ambrosius, and had the address to prescribe a medicine for that prince, in quality of physician, in which he had taken care privately to mix poison.§ Ambrosius being dead, in consequence of the poisonous medicine he had taken, the

* *Caer Went.* † Geoff. Monmouth, p. 252.

‡ Math. Westm. p. 135. Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 223. Gale's Scriptores. Geoff. Monm. p. 253.

§ Geoffry Monmouth, p. 253. Fabian, p. 82.

traitor instantly made his escape.* This gallant prince was interred in the convent of Ambrius, supposed to be on Salisbury plains.†

A. D. 495. About this period, Cerdic, a Saxon chieftain, with his son Cenric, landed in Britain, and at length founded the kingdom of Wessex, or the West Saxons.‡

A. D. 500. On the death of Ambrosius, his brother Uthur Pendragon was elected to the sovereign dignity.§

On the accession of this prince, the Saxons having gathered strength, had again recourse to arms; and, destroying all the fortified places, from Scotland to the city of York, they at length laid siege to Caer-ar-Clwyd,‖ the capital of the

* Geoffry Monmouth, p. 253. † Ibid. p. 274.

‡ Saxon Chron. p. 15. Henry Huntingdon, lib. II. p. 313. Script. post Bœdam. Ran. Higden, lib. V. p. 224.

§ Polidore Virgil, lib. III. p. 58. Math. Westm. p. 136. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 132. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 185.

‖ The present Dunbarton.

Strath-Clyde kingdom. Uthur Pendragon marched to the relief of that place, where a battle ensued, which, after a doubtful conflict, ended in favour of the Britons.* In this action, the Saxon leaders, Esca and Cosa, the son and cousin of Hengist, were taken prisoners,† and were confined in London: but these chiefs did not remain long in captivity; for, having corrupted their guards, they escaped out of prison, and passed over into Germany, whence they returned into Britain, with a fresh supply of soldiers. The two Saxon generals tried the fortune of war, once more, with Uthur, in a bloody and well-disputed action at Verulam.‡ On that day, which again might have given a decisive issue to their fortunes, the Britons obtained a complete victory; and the two leaders, Esca and Octa, were slain amidst the general slaughter of the Saxons. During the action, Uthur, being indisposed, was carried in a litter through

* Math. Westm. p. 136.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 138.

the ranks, to encourage the army by his presence. This event was immediately followed by the siege of Verulam; and, after a bloody resistance, that city was taken by the king of Britain.* At length, after a reign of seventeen years of service and of glory, Uthur Pendragon ended his days by poison. His death happened at Verulam, and after the victory he had obtained there. His indisposition having increased, it had been his custom every day to drink water out of a certain fountain at a little distance from that city, into which some of the Saxons, suborned for that purpose, had contrived to infuse poison.† The body of this British king was carried to the convent of Ambrius, and was interred there, near to the grave of his brother Ambrosius.‡

The recital of the extraordinary manner in which these princes have ended their

* Math. Westm. p. 139.

† Ibid. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 273.

‡ Geoff. Monmouth, p. 274.

days, may possibly be attended with the charge of credulity, or of affecting to enliven the subject, by exhibiting pictures of whatever is striking or uncommon. In extenuation of this charge, it is replied, that the facts have been taken from ancient writers, and are consistent with the manners of that barbarous age; and that such acts of violence were certainly frequent in the more enlightened period of the sixteenth century, at which time, it is well known, the art of poisoning had attained a high degree of refinement.

At this period, Maelgwyn, the eldest son of Caswallon-law-hir reigned in that district, which afterwards formed the principality of North Wales; and, like his father, had a pre-eminency over the other sovereigns of Cambria.* This prince was nephew to king Arthur,† by the sister of that monarch, and had received a liberal education, under the care of the celebrated A. D. 510.

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 185.

† Langhorne's Chron. Reg. Angl. p. 90.

Iltutus:* and whatever were the vices which justly stained his character, he was eminent for stature, valour, and other talents for command, which naturally raised men, in times like these, into distinction and power.† Maelgwyn was a formidable enemy to the Saxons, by his abilities, and by the strenuous opposition he made against that people: he likewise conquered the island of Man, and the Hebrides,‡ and, in consequence of this, was stiled Draco Insularis. This prince usually resided at Diganwy in Caernarvonshire.§ During this period, the naval power, not only of Britain, but also of Cambria, appears to have been an object of attention, and to have been established, in some degree, on a respectable footing.||

A. D. 517. On the death of Uthur Pendragon, his son Arthur was elected to the British

* One of the primitive fathers of the Cambrian church.

† Ranulph Higden. Gale's Script. lib. V. p. 225.

‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. 147, 148. § Ibid.

|| Selden's Mare Clausum, lib. II. cap. IX. p. 1310.

throne.* Divested of those illusions, that fancy or affection has raised, and which have ever attended the memory of this prince; there still remain concentred in his character those qualities which form a great warrior, and the milder virtues which constitute whatever is amiable and good.

After the ceremony of Arthur's coronation was performed at Caer Lleon upon Usk † in Monmouthshire, he marched against the Saxons in the north; and meeting with Colgrin, a Saxon prince, on the banks of the river Douglas, a battle ensued; in which the latter was defeated. A.D. 518. Apprized of a meditated attack on his camp, in the following night, by Pandulph the brother of Colgrin; Arthur sent a body of forces to intercept the enemy, many of whom were slain, and the remainder put to flight. The British king,

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 185. Verstegan, c. V. p. 132.

† *Caer Lleon ar Wysg*, or the city of Legions upon the river Uske. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 82.

then, laid siege to York; but being informed that a large body of Saxons under the command of Cerdic had landed in Scotland, he raised the siege, and retreated to London. *

By virtue of his authority as sovereign or chief ruler of the kingdom, Arthur demanded the assistance of Caron king of Scotland, of Maelgwyn the sovereign of North Wales, of Meyric, prince of South Wales, and of Cador the duke of Cornwall.† He likewise, by advice of his
A. D. council, desired the immediate support of
518. his nephew Howel, the king of Armorica.‡ The Britons had uniformly experienced from that country the most friendly assistance; and Howel, it is said, brought fifteen thousand men to the aid of his uncle. §

* Langhorne's Ch. Ang. p. 60. Math. West. p. 139, 140.

† Evans's Mirror, p. 127, 121. from an old Welsh MS.

‡ G. Monmouth, p. 279.

§ Math. West. p. 140

Thus strongly reinforced, the British prince marched towards Lincoln; where meeting with the enemy, a battle ensued; in which the Saxons were defeated, with the loss of six thousand men. The remainder flying into Scotland, took refuge in a wood; but were soon obliged to surrender to Arthur, on the conditions of giving hostages, of yielding up all their effects and spoils, and of retiring into their own country. *

Repenting of their late submission, those Saxons who had just before been defeated in Scotland, returned with an increased strength into Britain; and having formed a junction with Cerdic, and the different bodies under the command of Pascen and Eppa, invested Bath; † in hopes that the Britons, to preserve a place

* Math. West. p. 140. Langhorne, Ch. Ang. p. 61.

† Called by Ptolemy, Aquæ Calidæ, or hot water; by Antoninus, Aquæ Solis, or water of the sun; by the Britons, Caer Badon; and by the Saxons, Bathe, said to be built by king Bladud, a British prince. Humfrey Lluyd, p. 19. Evans, p. 121. Math. West. p. 141.

of such importance, would attempt to raise the siege, and of consequence bring on a battle. In this expectation they were not deceived, as Arthur determined to run every hazard rather than suffer that place to be taken.

The critical nature of the times not admitting of delay, he sent summonces to the North, to Oxford,* London, Cornwall, and into Wales; with orders to the different chiefs to exert themselves in this dangerous situation of their country.† His summons was instantly obeyed by a chieftain of North Wales, of the name of Nathan Llwyd; and who joined him with a body of five thousand men.‡ Having assembled his forces, king Arthur advanced to meet the enemy near Bath. The action on the first day between the two parties was obstinately disputed, great

* Called by the Britons, Rhyd-Ychen, or the ford of oxen; by the Saxons, Oxenford. See Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 24.

† Evans's Mirror, p. 120.

‡ Ibid. p. 121.

numbers on each side being slain; and though Arthur exerted his usual bravery and military talents, neither the Saxons nor Britons obtained any advantage. * Both armies kept the field, waiting for the return of day to renew the fight. The Saxons, during the night, had posted themselves upon a rising ground called Bannesdown, a situation of great imporportance, though it had been neglected by both armies the day before. Arthur perceiving his error, on the return of light, and the advantage of such a post, determined to dislodge them; which he accomplished after a very long and bloody resistance. Animated by the daring spirit of their prince, who rushed sword in hand amidst the ranks of the enemy, exhibiting astonishing proofs of valour and prowess, the Britons made a furious assault upon the Saxons,; and perceiving some disorder as they retreated down the hill, pushed them with still more vigour, and in the

* Math. Westm. p. 141. Langhorni Chr. Reg. Angl. p. 61.

A.D. 520. end entirely defeated them.* In this day's action, two Saxon chiefs, Colgrin and Pandulph, were slain. Cerdic retreated with the remains of his army to the island of Thanet, to which place he was pursued by Cador duke of Cornwall.†

An incident happened, at this time, which gave the Saxons leisure to breathe, and probably saved them from ruin. This event was produced by a diversion made in the north, by the Picts in alliance with the Saxons. These people knowing that Arthur was at a distance, and that his nephew Howel the king of Armorica lay sick at Caer-ar-Clwyd,‡ a town standing on the river Clyde; took advantage of these favourable incidents, and laid siege to that place; concluding that they should take it before any relief could be given. The activity and rapid movements of Arthur disappointed their views. Forsaking the advantage which might have

* Math. Westm. p. 141. Langhorni, Chr. Angl. p. 62. † Ibid. p. 141. ‡ Dun Barton.

arisen by pursuing his late success; in the true spirit of chivalry, he flew to the assistance of his nephew, and raised the siege. In resentment of this act of hostility in the Picts, which had wrested from him the fruits of his victory, Arthur laid waste their country; and it was only preserved from meditated ruin by the intercession of the Scottish bishops.*

The late victories having for the present secured the public peace, Howel the king of Armorica returned into his own kingdom.†

After the defeat of Cerdic, this prince had remained quiet in his own dominions, expecting a supply from Germany.‡ On the arrival of this reinforcement, he ravaged the British territories; and Arthur, though weakened by the numerous battles

* Langhorni Chron. Angl. p. 63. Math. West. p. 141. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 288.

† Rapin's Hist. Engl. vol. I. p. 37.

‡ Ranulph Higden. lib. V. p. 225. Langhorni Chron. Angl. Reg. p. 68.

he had fought, endeavoured, by every means in his power, to repel so formidable an enemy. The fortune of the war remained some time uncertain; but Cerdic, having at length gained a complete victory, the Britons were thrown into despair of being ever able to subdue the Saxons. Under the influence of this impression, and fearing lest he should wear out the strength of his remaining troops, by continuing the war, Arthur found it necessary to negotiate with Cerdic, and to cede to him a part of his dominions, rather than to hazard the whole upon the issue of arms. A peace was concluded, in consequence of this negotiation, by the surrender of the counties of Hants and Somerset. The Saxon prince, fatigued with the toils of a long war, and desirous of repose, readily agreed to the terms, and at this time founded the kingdom of Wessex, or of the West Saxons.

* Fabian, p 94. Langhorni Chr. Ang. Reg. p. 69. Ranulph Higden, lib. V. p. 225. Gale's Script.

At this period, the Angles arrived on the eastern coast of Britain; and in the course of time and slow progress of conquest, forced the natives to abandon that country; on which these people settled, and founded the fifth kingdom by the name of the East Angles.* A. D. 527.

The peace of Armorica having been disturbed by an insurrection in that state, Howel sent into Britain to solicit assistance; and the martial spirit of Arthur being unemployed at this time, he repaired in person to the relief of his nephew; and restored the quiet of that country by slaying with his own hands the leader of the rebellion.† Cerdic, taking advantage of the absence of king Arthur, and encouraged by the arrival of the Angles, broke the peace he had lately concluded; and being seconded by the valour of his son Cenric, he extended his conquests, by

* Langhorni, Chr. Reg. Angl. p. 73. Math. West, p. 142.

† Ibid. p. 74.

A. D. 527. gaining a signal victory over the Britons at Cerdic-leah, supposed to be in Buckinghamshire. * In this season of danger, Arthur returned from the continent; and his presence composed, in some measure, the disordered state of his kingdom.†

The king of Armorica, being fearful of an invasion from the *Visigoths,* once more desired the assistance of Arthur; and that prince, deserting the patriotism which had in general directed his conduct, left his own country in this perilous situation, to
A. D. 430. give assistance to his kinsman. He appointed, during his absence, his nephew Mordred‡ regent of the kingdom, and entrusted to his care Gueniver § his wife. ‖ He had scarcely left his dominions, when Cerdic, taking advantage of his absence, reduced the Isle of Wight.¶ But a blow

* Saxon Chron. p. 18.

† Langhorni, Chron. Reg. Angl. p. 74.

‡ *Meddrawd.*

§ *Gwenhwyfar*

‖ Langhorni, Chron. Reg. Angl. p. 78.

¶ Saxon Chron. p. 18.

more fatal to his interests and his feelings immediately followed. The regent, being captivated with the beauty of the British queen, and regardless of the duties which he owed to honour and to gratitude, had a criminal intercourse with that princess, and afterwards publicly married her. † There are crimes of such a nature, as to urge men, on the principle of self-preservation, to plunge still deeper in guilt. In such a situation was the regent, who had no other means of avoiding the just vengeance of Arthur, than by accomplishing his ruin. The more effectually to promote this design, he entered into an alliance with Cerdic; and to engage him more strongly in his interests, he ceded to him the dutchy of Cornwall, with the counties of Sussex and Surry, of Berks, Wilts, Devon, and Dorset.‡ Supported by such a powerful alliance, Mordred was immediately crowned at London. §

† Langhorni, Chr. Reg Angl. p. 78. Math. West. p. 144.

‡ Ibid. p. p. 79.

§ Ibid. Math. West. p. 144. Fabian, p. 94.

A. D. 535. After a stay of five years in Armorica, Arthur returned into Britain.* The conduct of that prince, wasting in romantic enterprizes such an interesting period, was so opposite to the dictates of natural feelings and of policy, that sober reflection is inclined to reject it as a legendary fable. Indeed a judicious recital of events in these ages is peculiarly difficult; directed, or rather bewildered in his way by the glimmering of imperfect and partial records, the historian can only judge of the reality of incidents, by what is probable and consistent.

On the return of Arthur into Britain, he was joined by many officers and soldiers, in consideration of the renown and esteem which he had acquired. With this small body of troops, he had to contend with the Saxons, the regent Mordred, and with the Picts, who had lately joined in the alliance.† However unequal the contest

* Langhorni, Chr Reg. Angl. p. 82. Math. West. p. 144.

† Ibid. p. 82.

in point of numbers, that deficiency was balanced by the abilities of Arthur; who by the resources of his genius was enabled, with great advantage, to carry on the war seven years; until at length, pursuing his enemies from one place to another, he drove them into Cornwall; and a battle ensued at Camlan,* between the two rivals, which decided the fortune of the war.† This action proved fatal to the Britons, as their best soldiers in both armies were slain; ‡ and the two princes, engaging with great fury, perished by each other's sword. The traitor Mordred immediately fell by the hand of Arthur.§ The latter prince, sorely wounded, was carried to Glastonbury Abbey; || and after lingering a few days, died, and was interred there,¶ with Guenìver his second and best beloved wife.** Thus fell by the

A. D. 542.

* Camden's Brit. p. 194. Holland's translation.

† Langhorni, Chr. Reg. Ang. p. 82—88.

‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

|| *Ynys Afallon*, or *Ynys Wydrin.*

¶ Langhorni, p. 88.

** De Antiq. Glastonb. p. 306. Gale's Script.

hand of treason, full of days and of glory, the renowned Arthur. Such was the veneration in which this celebrated warrior was held by the Britons, that for many ages they could not be persuaded he was dead, but fondly expected his return from foreign countries to reinstate the British empire.

During the late reigns, the ancient Britons had attained to the meridian of their glory; but the period assigned for the close of their empire drew nigh, though the beams which brightened its decline lingered for a time in the west, until gradually receding from the sight, not a single ray remained upon the horizon.

The death of Arthur decided the fate of Britain. The splendour which had distinguished the late æra, deriving its lustre from the virtue of a few individuals, became clouded by opposite qualities in the princes of the succeeding period. Before Arthur expired, he appointed his nephew Constantine, the son of Cador, duke of

Cornwall, to succeed him in his dignity;* but this elevation could only extend to his hereditary dominions, as the sovereignty of Britain was purely elective.† However, he was called to that dignity by the voice of the people.‡ During his reign, the Saxons, having espoused the cause of the sons of Mordred, the late regent, with a view, no doubt, of fomenting divisions, those two princes, after bloody wars with Constantine, and with various success, were obliged to give up the contest. One of these unfortunate youths, having fled for sanctuary into the church of St. Amphibalus in Winchester, was there cruelly murdered by the British king; and the other, taking refuge in a convent in London, was massacred at the altar, a little time after, by the same prince.§ A. D. 542.

* Ran. Higden. Gale's Script. p. 225. Langhorni, p. 86. Math. Westm. p. 145. G. Monmouth, p. 358.

† Langhorni, p. 101. Rowland, p. 171. Verstegan, chap. V. p. 132.

‡ Rowland, p. 184.

§ Ran. Higden, p. 225. Gale's Script. Langhorni, p. 101. Math. Westm. p. 145. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 359. Gildas Epistola, p. 10.

At length, this king, being harassed by the Saxons, retired to his hereditary dominions of Cornwall,* and, struck with remorse for the late murders, or sinking into the superstition of the age, he renounced the world, and engaged in a religious life † This prince was the last king of Britain of the Cornwall family. ‡

Encouraged by the death of Arthur, and the dismay of the Britons in consequence of that event, a large body of
A. D. 547. Saxons, under the command of Ida, landed in Yorkshire, and, with the consent of their countrymen, who were already settled there, founded the kingdom of Northumberland. §

A. D. 552. Maelgwyn, the king of North Wales, endowed, at this time, the see of Bangor, with lands and franchises: || he likewise

* Rowland, p. 146.
† Ibid. p. 187. Langhorni, p. 117.
‡ Rowland, p. 170.
§ Saxon Annals, p. 19.
|| Rowland, p. 187.

erected the town of that name;* and also built or repaired Shrewsbury, and the castle of Harlech.† It was at Bangor that this prince, struck, as it is said, with remorse, for the crimes of his past life, resolved to devote himself to the austerities of a cloister; but he soon renounced that design, and returned to the affairs of government, and to his old habits of criminal pleasures.‡

At this period, when the Saxons had conquered a great part of Britain, and had made their approaches to the borders of Cambria, that country appears to have been divided into six principalities. And in the present critical situation of affairs, the people of those districts assembled at the mouth of the river Dyvi, and elected A. D. 560.
Maelgwyn to the sovereign dignity.§ The

* Langhorni, p. 98.

† J. Rossi, Ant. Warw. p. 65.

‡ Gildas Epistola, p. 12. Gale's Scriptores. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 147.

§ Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 63. Verstegan, chap. V, p. 132.

choice of the Britons, in such a dangerous crisis reflects some degree of honour on this prince; and seems to contradict the character given of him by Gildas, who has censured him in the true spirit of monastic severity.

A. D. 560. Upon the death of Maelgwyn, his son Rhun succeeded to the government of North Wales.* This Prince had a long and bloody war with the Saxons of Northumberland; and on his return into Wales, he gave great privileges to the inhabitants of Caernarvonshire, as a recompense for having detained them so long from their families, on that northern expedition.† This prince resided at Caer Rhun, situated upon the banks of the river Conway;‡ and at his death was succeeded by
A. D. 586. his son Beli.§

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 187.

† Ibid. p. 164.

‡ Ibid. p. 148.

§ Ibid. p. 187.

At this period arrived Crida, with a numerous body of Saxons; and, having forced the Britons beyond the Severn, he founded the kingdom of Mercia, the greatest and the last principality of the Saxon heptarchy.* The establishment of these seven kingdoms narrowed the bounds of the British dominions. Pressed on every side by advancing enemies, and weakened by incessant wars, the Britons were at length obliged to retire before the Saxon arms. But they retired indignant, and by slow degrees, to make another struggle for liberty amidst the mountains of Wales, a country which had been formed by nature as the suitable retreat, and the last asylum, of freedom.

Many Britons likewise retired into Cornwall and Armorica; and the latter country, about this time, took the name of Bretaigne,† on account of the great number of the refugees who had settled in it.

* Math. Westm. p. 150.

† Verstegan, chap. V. p. 132, 133.

The native Britons being in a great measure exterminated, or forced to fly into other countries, and the Saxons having carried on their conquests with the same destructive spirit which distinguished the other northern nations, the government of the conquerors, their laws, manners, and language, with the names also of many of their cities, villages, rivers, and woods,* were of consequence introduced into Britain, and became so perfectly established, that almost the remembrance of ancient institutions was lost.

In reflecting on the many causes which have contributed to the decline of the ancient British empire, *one* will perhaps occur which may be thought more striking than the rest. This defect in the national character of the Britons was an almost uniform negligence in establishing a naval power, although experience, and a maritime situation, pointed out its expediency, as the only effectual means of contending

* Verstegan, chap. V. p. 133.

with the Saxons, and of counteracting their designs. This mode of defence was so obvious, that it might have struck the minds of any people, more rude than the Britons, who were situated in an island, and exposed to continual invasions.

History of Wales.

BOOK III.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE WARS BETWEEN THE SAXONS AND WELSH, TO THE DEATH OF RODERIC THE GREAT.

THE British empire being reduced to the narrow limits of Cambria, except the small territories of Cornwall and Strath-Clyde, that country, about this period, took the name of Wales: the inhabitants, likewise, with their ancient situation, lost the title of Britons, and became distinguished by the name of the Welsh. Possessed of the warlike spirit which marked the British character, they carried into their mountains that rooted inveteracy

against the Saxons, which hereditary wars, heightened by every injury, would naturally excite. The same severity of fortune which distinguished the ancient Britons awaited the descendants of that brave people in their last asylum, as the conquest of this barren domain became the object of ambition and policy to the Saxon and Norman princes.

About this period, the province of *Cymru*, or Wales, appears to have been divided into six principalities, and governed by so many Reguli,* acknowledging, however, the supremacy of the kings of North Wales. This region extended about two hundred miles in length, and one hundred in breadth,† and was separated from England ‡ by the rivers Severn and Dee, and surrounded on every other side by the Irish sea. § The inhabitants

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary of Britain, p. 63.

† Ibid. p. 57. Verstegan, chap. I, p. 1.

‡ *Lloegr.*

§ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 50.

A. D. 599. in the British language, were denominated *Cymry*; and they called the Saxons, *Saeson*, and their language, *Saesonaeg*.*

A. D. 599. At this period, Jago ap Beli reigned in North Wales, and founded the deanery of
A. D. 603. Bangor.† His son Cadvan soon after succeeded to that dignity.‡ The early part of this prince's reign was distinguished by the battle of Chester,§ and by the memorable massacre of the monks of Bangor.

Edelfrid, the king of Northumberland, having obtained an advantage over the northern Britons, turned his arms against the Welsh, who were at that time in

* Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 13, 51.

† Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 187.

‡ Ibid. p. 188.

§ Called by the Britons Caer-Lleon-ar-Ddyfrdwy, or, the city of the legions, upon the water of Dee; the Saxons called it Legan-Cestre, and afterwards, by abbreviation, Chester: it appears, in Antoninus, that it was called in Latin, Deva, from the river Dee. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 27.

possession of Chester. On his arrival near that city, his army being drawn up in front of the enemy, he perceived a body of men without military appearance, who were stationed in a place of security. Struck with the novelty of the sight, he enquired into the cause; and was told that they were monks from the monastery of Bangor, who had come to offer up their prayers for the prosperous event of the day. Enraged with an opposition so singular in its nature, and stimulated by hatred of a religion which threatened the destruction of Paganism, Edelfred ordered his army to assault this defenceless and pious troop, who had already fasted and prayed for the space of three days. Twelve hundred of these unfortunate Religious were cut in pieces; fifty only of the whole number present in the battle having escaped the enemy's sword. Brochmael, * prince of Powys, having deserted their protection, had fled out of

* *Brochwel Ysgithrog.*

the field with his soldiers, on the first advance of the Saxons.

This unfavourable omen might naturally have cooled the ardour of a people less superstitious than the Welsh; but it seems that they regarded this act of Edelfred as an impious sacrilege; and though in the action which ensued, or in the pursuit, they were terribly slaughtered, it appears however, by the great loss which their enemies sustained, that they made a spirited resistance.* After the battle, the Saxon prince marched to Bangor, a British monastery situated on the banks of the river Dee; and with a barbarism peculiar to the Goths, destructive of those arts which soften and improve human nature, he entirely laid waste that ancient and celebrated seminary of learning, and committed to the flames its valuable library.†

* Langhorni. Chr. Reg. Ang. p. 150. Bede, lib. II. cap. II. p. 80. Saxon Chron. p. 25. William Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 17.

† Langhorni, p. 151. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 71.

Edelfred then attempted to penetrate into Wales; but his passage over the Dee at Bangor was disputed by the prince of Powys, who gallantly sustained the charge until relieved by Cadvan the king of North Wales, by Meredydh the king of South Wales, and Bledrus the sovereign of Cornwall.* When the confederated princes had joined their forces, they called in religion to their aid. Dunothus † the abbot of Bangor, made an orration to the army; and, before the action commenced, gave orders, that the soldiers should kiss the ground in commemoration of the communion of the body of Christ, and should take up water into their hands out of the river Dee, and drink it in remembrance of his sacred blood which was shed for them.‡ Animated by this act of devotion, which in these times had a powerful influence on the mind, and stung with resentment for the disgrace and injuries

* Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 72. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 369. † *Dinoeth.*

‡ Langhorni, p. 151. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 72.

they had lately received, the Welsh encountered the Saxons with great bravery, entirely defeated them, with the loss of above ten thousand men; and obliged Edelfred, with the remainder of his army, to retreat into their own country.* There was something singular in the fortunate event of that day, as an act of retaliative justice, and as it severely punished, in the sight of Bangor, the recent desolation of its monastery.

In consequence of this victory, Cadvan
A. D. 613. king of North Wales was elected at Chester to the sovereignty of Britain; † but in the present loss of Empire, that dignity could extend no further, than to command the united forces of the remaining Britons.

On the death of Cadvan, his son Cadwallon succeeded to the kingdom of North Wales. ‡ This prince carried his arms

* Verstegan, chap. V. p. 132. Geoff. Monmouth, p. 371. Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 72. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p, 188. Langhorni, Chr. Reg. Ang. p. 151. † Ibid. ‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188.

into Northumberland against Edwin the king of Deira, who had been educated in the court of Cadwallon; but a violent animosity had of late arisen between the two princes. * The British king, advancing against the Saxon prince into Northumberland, was routed by Edwin, in a bloody battle fought at Widrington;† who pursuing his good fortune, extended his conquests over all the British territories in Wales, as well as the islands of Mona and Man. ‡

During these transactions Cadwallon had taken refuge in Ireland. § After an absence of some years, this prince recovered his dominions. An union of interests having engaged him in an alliance

* Geoff. Monmouth, p. 372, 376. Vaughan of Hengwrt's Dissertation on British Chron. taken from the Triades.

† *Dinwydr.*

‡ Math. West. p. 165. Bede's Eccl. History, cap. IX. p. 87. William Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 18. Script. post. Bedam. Vaughan of Hengwrt's Dissertation on British Chron. taken from the Triades.

§ Ibid.

with Penda king of Mercia, the two princes, with their joint forces, made a rapid movement into Yorkshire, and entirely
A. D. 633. defeated the Northumbrian king in Hatfield forest.* Edwin and his son fell in the battle, and left their country exposed to the ferocions spirit of the confederate princes.† A scene of desolation followed this victory, but Cadwallon surpassed his Pagan associate in cruelty and merciless ravages.‡

On the death of Edwin, Edfridus succeeded to the kingdom of Bernicia, and being nearly related to Penda by his mother, fled to the Mercian prince for protection.§ Cadwallon retiring to York,

* Bede, lib. II. cap. XX. p. 101. Brompton's Chron. p. 284.

† Saxon Chron. p. 29. Langhorni, Chr. Reg. p. 170.

‡ Langhorni, Chr. Reg. Ang. p. 182. J. Brompton's Chron. p. 784. William Malmsbury, lib. I. p. 18, Gale's Script.

§ Bede, lib. III. cap. I. p. 103. Brompton's Chron. p. 784, 785. Langhorni, p. 182.

carried on from thence his furious depredations.* At this juncture, Osric assumed the crown of Deira; † and in hopes with one blow to take revenge for his desolated country, he invested that city; but, in a sally made by Cadwallon, he was slain, and his army defeated.‡ His associate, the king of Bernicia, seeing their utmost exertions sink under the superior valour or fortune of the British prince, attempted to try the arts of negociation. With this view he came to treat with Cadwallon in person, with only twelve soldiers in his train; but in return for such an instance of generous confidence, the Saxon prince, with his attendants, were basely assasinated.§ This outrage fully justifies the character of a cruel and faithless tyrant, given to this prince by the Saxon writers ||

A. D. 634.

* Math. Westm. p. 167. † *Deifr.*

‡ Ibid, Langhorni, p. 184. Brompton's Chron. p. 785.

§ Bede Eccl. Hist, lib. III. cap. I. p, 103, Brompton's Chron. p. 786. Math. Westm. p. 167. Langhorni Chr. p. 184.

|| Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 66.

A. D. 635. At this time, Cadwallon was chosen king of the Britons, very probably on account of his late success, and his ability to carry on the war.*

The British king after this act of violence, still continued to desolate the country, until his career was stopped by Oswald; who, succeeding to the crowns of Deira and Bernicia,† united them into the kingdom of Northumberland.‡ This prince, who at this time had embraced the Christian religion, was yet in his early youth, and had collected a small and determined band to oppose Cadwallon and his victorious army: and when the British king marched to attack the Saxons, he proceeded with all the security and insolence which a contempt of enemies, and the pride of victory, are apt to inspire. But Oswald, sensible of the greatness of the object for which he contended, acted

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188.

† *Bryneich.*

‡ Brompton's Chron. p. 785, Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 13.

with the utmost circumspection. With a view to heighten the ardour of his troops by religious enthusiasm, or to draw down prosperity on his arms by an act of devotion, he ordered a cross to be erected on the field of battle, to serve as the standard of the army. At this pious work Oswald himself assisted; and the moment before the trumpet sounded the charge, that prince, accompanied by his army, kneeled at the foot of the cross; appealed to heaven for the justice of his cause, and implored its assistance to confound the insolence of his enemies. Fortified by these acts of piety in their sovereign, the Saxon troops early in the morning advanced to attack the enemy, and stormed their camp. In the action Cadwallon was slain; and the Welsh, driven into confusion by the death of their prince, were routed, and almost entirely cut in pieces. This battle is said to have happened at Denisbourne in Northumberland.*

* Bede's Eccl. Hist. lib. III. cap. II. p. 104. William Malmsbury, lib. I. cap. III. p. 19.

A. D. 676. On the death of this prince, his son Cadwalader succeeded to the kingdom of North Wales, and to the ideal sovereignty of Britain.* In the course of his reign, the irruptions of the Saxons had become more frequent; and a famine, with its usual attendant, a pestilential distemper, had raged in Britain;† the consequent evils of desolating wars, and of a disordered police. To avoid the common dangers of his country, a conduct which did not mark a magnanimous spirit, Cadwalader, with numbers of his nobility and other

A. D. 689. subjects, retired to Alan, his kinsman, the king of Bretaigne; in whose court he found an hospitable reception.‡ From an uniform, and perhaps a singular principle of affection, we have seen this country afford an asylum to the Britons in every season of adversity.

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188. Verstegan, c. V. p. 132.

† Wynne, Hist. Wales, p. 8.

‡ Baker's Chron. p. 4. J. Fordun's Hist. Scot. Gale's Scriptor. p. 647.

After residing some time in the court of Bretaigne, Cadwalader prepared to return into Wales, having heard that the famine and pestilence had ceased, and that the Saxons, with increasing power, were endeavouring to extend their conquests.* With this view, he collected an army composed of his own subjects and his allies the Bretons, with a suitable fleet to transport them across the channel.† A magnanimous prince, in such a situation, would either have rescued his country from its danger, or would have buried himself in its ruins. But at the moment that Cadwalader was going to embark, he was warned in a vision, which he fancied to be a sudden impulse from Heaven, and which directed him to lay aside the cares of the world; to go immediately to Rome; and to receive holy orders from the hands of the Pope. This illusion, the effect of a weak or a distempered mind,

* Baker's Chron. p. 4. Welsh Chron. by Caradoc of Llancarvan, and republished by Dr. Powel, p. 3.

† Ibid.

he communicated to the king of Bretaigne; who, probably from interested motives, took advantage of this incident to act on the weakness of this prince, and on the credulous spirit of his nation; a spirit which, in common with every other people in the same stage of refinement, always paid a high veneration to men, who, under the impulse of a warm imagination, fancied themselves to be endued with the power of revealing future events.

Having consulted the prophetic books of the two Merlins,* which, by the Britons, were deemed as sacred as the pages of the Roman Sybils, Alan told him that they predicted the ruin of the British empire, until the time that the bones of king Cadwalader should be brought back from Rome. He then advised him to act up to the patriotic design, and to follow the

* There were two of that name; the first, called Merddyn Wyllt, was born in Scotland; the other, called Merddyn Emrys, was born at Carmarthen. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 79. Lewis Morris.

impulse of his vision. Thus confirmed in the delusion, Cadwalader proceeded to Rome; and, agreeably to the interested views of the Roman pontiffs, was kindly received by pope Sergius. After he had submitted to have his head shaven, and to be initiated into the order of white monks, this British king lived eight years as a religious recluse;* exemplary in the piety of those days; but in a situation unworthy of a prince; as it secluded him from the practice of active virtue; and of consequence, from promoting the real interests of his people; for which great end alone princes are delegated to rule mankind.

The death of Cadwalader closed the imperial dignity which had been annexed many ages to the British government.† The Welsh princes of later times usually A. D. 703.

* Wynne, Hist. Wales, p. 10, 11.

† Welsh Chron. p. 5. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 66.

resided at Diganwy,* on the water of Conway,† and at Caer Segont,‡ near Caernarvon.§

Cadwalader having thus, in the weakness of superstition, abdicated his throne, and his son Edwal,|| yet a minor, being under the protection of Alan, this latter prince appears to have thrown off the mask, and to have been desirous of realising the prospects of ambition, which the late event had opened to his view. Under colour, no doubt, of acting for the common cause, he attached to his service those Welsh who had been the followers of the late prince; and with these troops, and a body of his own subjects, under the command of his son Ivor, a descent

* Famous, in Tacitus, by the name of Cangorum, (the people there being called Cangi), and called afterwards Gannock by the English. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 66.

† *Cynwy*. ‡ Called, by the Romans, Segontium.

§ Caer-yn-ar-von; the city opposite Mona. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 65. Wynne, Hist. Wales, p. 12.

|| *Edwal Iwrch.*

was made on the western coast of Britain. Alarmed at this dangerous invasion, the Saxons opposed Ivor with their accustomed spirit and resolution.* But that prince, having defeated them with great slaughter, gained possession of Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset.† To oppose this invasion, become formidable by the acquisition of these territories to Ivor, Kentwyn, king of the West Saxons, drew together a considerable force. Each of the princes, sensible of the importance of the contest, seemed unwilling to put it to the decision of arms. In the end, the arts of love and negotiation prevailed: and Ivor, satisfied with the conquests already made, agreed to marry Ethelburga, the cousin of the Saxon prince. By this marriage, by the death of Kentwyn, and by Cedwell, the nephew of that Saxon prince, retiring to Rome, Ivor became sovereign of the western part of Britain, including the Saxon

* Welsh Chron. p. 7, 8.

† Welsh Chron. p. 8, by Caradoc of Llancarvan; translated, by Dr. Powell, about 1584.

and British territories. Wearied, at length, with the cares of government, or sinking into the superstition of the age, or struck with remorse for his past injustice, this prince withdrew from the cares of royalty, and buried himself in the recesses of a cloister. As a more effectual atonement for the injuries which had been done to the family of Cadwalader, he left to Roderic Moelwynoc, the grandson of that prince, his British dominions.*

A. D. 720. Roderic had no sooner taken possession of his territories, than Adelred, who succeeded Ivor in the Saxon part of his dominions, invaded Devonshire; and, with fire and sword, carried desolation through the country. He was proceeding with the
A. D. 721. like ravages into Cornwall; but was met upon the confines by the Britons, who defeated his forces, and obliged him to retreat into his own dominions.†

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 15. Rowland's Mon. p. 188.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 15.



THE WELSH ARMY.

The fertile and pleasant lands, which are situated between the Severn and the Wye, tempted Ethelbald to form the design of annexing them to his Mercian kingdom. With this view, he invaded that part of the country with a powerful army, and proceeded with the usual devastations as far as Carno mountain near Abergavenny.* On this mountain he was opposed by the Welsh; and a fierce and bloody battle ensued, which was not however decisive in favour of either party.† The same prince, some years after, having formed an alliance with Adelred, king of the West Saxons, these princes marched their united forces into Wales. Though the danger was imminent, and their powers of resistance comparatively small, the Welsh, with great spirit, opposed the combined princes; and a well-contested action, and miserable slaughter on both sides, ensued, until the

A. D. 728

A. D. 733.

* *Abergefni.*

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 16. At this time (A. D. 734.) died the venerable Bede. Flores' Hist. Mat. West. p. 203.

former were overpowered by superiority of numbers. Dispirited by this defeat, and taking advantage of a rupture which had arisen between Ethelbald and Cudred, who had succeeded to the throne of the West Saxons, the Welsh entered into an alliance with the latter prince. Elated, however, with his late victory, and regardless of this accession to their power, Ethelbald attempted another invasion of Wales, and advanced as far as Hereford.*
A. D. 746. At that place, likewise, he met with a spirited resistance from the Welsh; and, by the assistance of their allies, they gave him a signal overthrow.† But a reconciliation taking place between the Saxon kings, Cudred withdrew from the interests of the Welsh, and joined his forces with those of Ethelbald. The military prowess of their allies being thus taken from the Welsh, the scale was turned; and, in another

* Anciently called Henffordd, or the Old Road of Englishmen. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 74.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 17.

battle, which soon after ensued with the Saxons, they were entirely discomfited.*

A dark cloud at this period settled over the British hemisphere; and the few governments which still remained amidst the ruins of time, except those of Wales, became extinguished one after the other. Eadbert, the king of Northumberland, an active and valiant prince, turned his arms against the Strath-Clyde Britons, and made himself master of Caer-ar-Clwyd, the capital of their dominions.† The western part of Britain, likewise, which had been under the sovereignty of Roderic Moelwynoc, the son of Edwal, was at this time conquered by the Saxons; and that prince forced to retire into North Wales. The government of this country had been possessed by the two sons of Bledrus, the A. D. 750.

* Henry Huntingdon, p. 340. Script. post Bedam. Mat. Westm. p. 206. Brompton, p. 768.

† Langhorni Chr. Reg. Ang. page 287. Simon Dunelme, p. 105. Sammes's Ant. of Britain, page 546.

prince of Cornwall, ever since Cadvan had been elected to the sovereign dignity: and, however singular the incident may
A. D. 750. appear, Roderic seems to have been quietly permitted to enjoy his right as soon as he had announced his claim.* This prince soon after died; and left two sons, Cynan Tindaethwy and Howel.† He usually resided at Caer Segont, on the straits of the Menai, in Caernarvonshire.‡

Amidst the continual wars, which had so long harassed the Saxons and the Welsh, neither of these people had much leisure to attend to maritime affairs; and the naval power of Britain was of course inconsiderable: however, the attention, which was given to this necessary measure, was at this time only to be found in the ports of Wales.§

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 17, 18.

‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 172.

§ Berkeley's Naval Hist. of Brit. p. 58.

Cynan Tindaethwy, the eldest son of the deceased prince, succeeded to the throne of North Wales.* The late success of the Saxons, in the western part of Britain, encouraged them in the design of extending their dominions, and inspired them with a confident expectation of being able to make an easy conquest of Wales. In the pursuit of this design, they proceeded as far as Hereford; but on that frontier they were again fiercely received by the Welsh; and the battle very probably ended in favour of the latter, history being silent as to the event and further progress of the invasion.† A. D. 755.

At this time Offa reigned in Mercia.‡ A. D. 763.

The easiness of approach to the fertile plains of South Wales invited continual inroads; and, consequently, that country

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 18.

‡ Saxon Annal. p. 59.

was more harassed, and sooner narrowed in its boundaries, than the mountainous
A. D. 776. territory of North Wales. The inhabitants of South Wales, fired with resentment at reiterated injuries, rose up in arms; entered Mercia with fire and sword; and retaliated on the Saxons their usual devastations. They soon after made other successful inroads; and, obliging their enemies to retire beyond the Severn, returned into their own country with a considerable quantity of cattle. Allured by the prospect of spoil, and animated by their late success, instead of acting upon the defensive, which had hitherto been the utmost exertion of the Welsh, a new plan of operation took place; a spirit of enterprise ensued; and, by sudden and frequent incursions into Mercia, they enriched themselves, avenged their national injuries, and filled the Saxon borders with continual alarm and devastation.*

These unusual and formidable exertions

* Welsh Chron. p. 19.

in the Welsh induced Offa to enter into a league with the other Saxon princes; that, with their united strength, they might at once destroy, or give a check to this enterprising spirit.* A considerable army, in consequence, passed the Severn into Wales; but the Welsh, too weak to encounter so great a force, retreated to the mountains; and the Saxons, likewise, unable to penetrate, with advantage, the natural fortifications of the country, returned into Mercia.† Offa, sensible of the evils produced by these inroads, and unable to prevent them, agreeably to the policy of his military ancestors, planted a colony of Saxons in the country near the Severn ‡ and Wye; § whose immediate interest it became to confine to the mountains the valour and restless activity of the Welsh. To mark the confines of each country, or to give greater security to his

* Welsh Chron. p. 19.

† Ibid.

‡ *Hafren* and *Gwy*.

§ Langhorni Chron. Reg. Ang. p. 292.

A. D. 780. own, he likewise caused a deep dyke and a high rampart to be made, which extended a hundred miles, over rocks and mountains, and across deep vallies and rivers, from the water of Dee to the mouth of the Wye.* This great work still retains the ancient name of Clawdh Offa, or Offa's Dyke; and is an evidence of the ignorance and barbarism of the age, having been raised with immense labour, but directed to no important use, either to mark the boundaries, or as a line of defence between hostile nations. The large towns and cities, situated to the east of the Severn and Dee, were probably built at this period, to check the irruptions of the Welsh, by a strong line of frontier posts.† The villages, likewise, on the east side of Clawdh Offa, whose names terminate in *ton* or *ham*, were, about this time, inhabited by Saxons,‡ who were

* Welsh Chron. p. 19. Langhorni Chron. Ang. p. 292. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 51.

† Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 26.

‡ Ibid. p. 51.

usually called *Gwyr-y-mers*, or the Men of Mercia; though, in after-times, the Welsh settled on each side of the dyke.*

The change which this innovation had made in Powys, by narrowing its boundaries, and Shrewsbury having been lately taken by the Saxons, made it necessary to remove the royal residence of the princes of Powys, from that town to Mathraval,† situated in the present county of Montgomery.‡

Though an interval of peace had given Offa the opportunity of finishing this celebrated Dyke, the Welsh were not insensible of the dishonour and injury done to their country. But concealing their feelings under the mask of indifference, they

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 50,

† Its ancient name was *Pengwern*, or the head of a place where alders grow, and was the seat of the kings of Powys; whence the Saxon term Schrewsbury is derived. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 27.

‡ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 70.

secretly concerted the plan of its destruction; and acting, by previous agreement, with the kings of Northumberland and of the South Saxons, with whom they were then in alliance, they suddenly beset Clawdh Offa in the night of St. Stephen's day, the night itself being extremely dark; and assisted also by the country people, they broke down the rampart, and in a short time filled up and levelled the Dyke to the length of a bow-shot. Early in the morning, they assailed the camp of king Offa,* and slew great number of his soldiers; who, depending on the truce, were either asleep or unarmed, or had given themselves up to the pleasures, or to the religious observance, of the festival.†

The Saxon prince instantly rallied his forces, and rushed into the midst of the enemy; but his troops, all in confusion

* Supposed to be at Sutton Wallis near Hereford.

† Math. Paris Monachi Albanensis Vita Duorum Offarum Merciorum Regum, p. 975, 976.

and not properly armed, were intimidated, and could not sustain the onset of the Welsh; and it was not without great difficulty and slaughter, that they were able to bring off their leader, and recover their camp. On this disaster, Offa retired into his own dominions, meditating vengeance. The first impression of his anger, on his return, for this insulting violation of the truce, fell upon the hostages which were given by those persons who had lately broken the peace, whom he ordered to be more strictly confined; and still unsatisfied with this severity, their wives and families were either sold, or reserved for perpetual slavery.*

Offa, still breathing revenge, marched, some time after, into the confines of Wales, with a well equipped and formidable army; but for several years he was not able to make any impression, being greatly annoyed by the Welsh; who, from their woods and mountains, made con-

* Math. Paris Monachi Albanensis, &c. p. 976.

tinual irruptions upon his forces.* Both parties coming, at length, to a general engagement upon Rhudd-lan marsh, the
A, D. 795. Welsh, under the command of Caradoc, a chieftain of the country, and descended from the house of Cornwall, were entirely defeated † with a dreadful slaughter; and their leader slain in the action.‡ Besides this great loss which the welsh had suffered, the Saxon prince commanded all the children and the men, who had unfortunate fell into his hands, to be massacred; the women scarcely escaping his fury.§

The memory of this tragical event has been carried down to posterity, by an ancient ballad called Morva Rhudd-lan, the notes of which are most tenderly plaintive.

* Math. Paris vita Duorum Offarum, p. 976.

† Welsh Chron. p. 20.

‡ According to tradition, the remaining Welsh who had escaped the enemy's sword, flying with precipitation over the marsh, perished in the water by the flowing of the tide.

§ Math. Paris vita Duorum Offarum, p. 976.

Soon after this memorable event, died Offa, king of Mercia.* Some historians say that he was slain in the battle of Rhudd-lan, with Meredydh the prince of † Pembroke.‡ A. D. 796.

It may not be unnecessary here, after a tedious recital of inroads and battles, to give some relief to the reader's mind, by opening to his view the modes of life and private manners of the ancient Welsh.

We are indebted to Giraldus Cambrensis. for the following very lively traits which he has transmitted of the manners of the Welsh nation; at a period when those manners were pure and unadulterated by foreign intercourse. And though this writer may, on some occasions, sink into credulous weakness, and be directed by a partial spirit, yet surely, in their great outlines, the representations which

* Welsh Chron. p. 20.

† *Dyfed.*

‡ Camden's Britannia, Gibson's Notes on Flintshire, p. 690, from Mss. of Vaughan, Hengwrt.

he has given of manners, though himself a native of the country must have been closely copied from original features, and must afford a striking resemblance of national character.

The Welsh * were a nation light and active, and more fierce than strong; from the lowest to the highest of the people they were devoted to arms, which the plowman as well as the courtier was prepared to seize on the first summons. Their usual custom in works of husbandry was, that for oats they opened the soil, once only in March or April; and for wheat or rye, they turned it up, twice in the summer, and a third time in winter about the season of thrashing.

The chief sustenance of this people, in respect of their food, was cattle and oats, besides milk, cheese, and butter; though they usually ate more plentifully of flesh meat than of bread.

* Giraldus Cambrensis Itiner. cap. IV. V.

As they were not engaged in the occupations of traffic either by sea or land, their time was entirely employed in military affairs. They were so anxious for the preservation of their country and its liberties, that they esteemed it delightful not only to fight for them, but even to sacrifice their lives; and agreeably to this spirit, they entertained an idea, that it was a disgrace to die in their beds, but an honour to fall in the field. Such was their eager courage,, that although unarmed, they often dared to engage with men entirely covered with armour; and in such engagements, by their activity and valour, they frequently came off conquerors. That their activity might not be impeded by any unnecessary incumbrance, they made use of light armour; such as smaller coats of mail, shields, and sometimes of iron greaves. Their offensive weapons were arrows and long spears. Their bows were usually made of slight twigs joined or twisted together, and though rude in their form, they discharged an arrow with great

force. The people of North Wales were remarkable for spears so long and well pointed, that they could pierce through an iron coat of mail. The men of South Wales were accounted the most expert archers. The chieftains when they marched to war, were mounted on swift horses, bred in the country; the lower sorts of people, on account of the marshes, as well as the inequalities of the ground marched on foot to battle; though, whenever the occasion or the place rendered it necessary for the purpose either of fighting or flying, the horsemen themselves dismounted and served on foot.

The Welsh were accustomed to walk with their feet entirely bare; or, instead of shoes, they used boots of raw leather.

In the time of peace, the young men accustomed themselves to penetrate the woods and thickets, and to run over the tops of mountains; and by continuing this exercise through the day and night,

they prepared themselves for the fatigues and employments of war.

These people were not given to excess either in eating or drinking. They had no set time appointed for their meals, nor any expensive richness in their clothes. Their whole attention was occupied in the splendid appearance of their horses and arms, in the defence of their country, and in the care of their plunder. Accustomed to fast from morning to night, their minds were wholly employed on their business; they gave up the day entirely to prudent deliberations; and in the evening they partook of a sober supper. But if at any time it happened that they were not able to procure any, or only a very sparing repast, they patiently waited until the next morning; and, in this situation, prevented neither by hunger nor cold, they were eager to take advantage of dark and stormy nights for hostile invasions.

There was not a beggar to be seen among these people; for the tables of all were common to all; and with them bounty, and particularly hospitable entertainment, were in higher estimation than any of the other virtues. Hospitality, indeed, was so much the habit of this nation, by a mutual return of such civilities, that it was neither offered to nor requested by travellers. As soon as they entered any house, they immediately delivered their arms into the custody of a person in the family; and if they suffered their feet to be washed by those who for that purpose directly offered them water, they were considered as lodgers for the night. The refusal of this civility intimated their desire of a morning's refreshment only. The offer of water for the purpose of washing the feet was considered as an invitation to accept of hospitable entertainment. The young men usually marched in parties, or in tribes, a leader being appointed to each: and as they were devoted to arms, or given up to leisure, and were

courageous in the defence of their country, they were permitted to enter the house of any person with the same security as their own. The strangers, who arrived in the morning, were entertained until evening with the conversation of young women, and with the music of the harp; for in this country almost every house was provided with both. Hence we may reasonably conclude, that the people were not much inclined to jealousy. Such an influence had the habit of music on their minds, and its fascinating powers, that in every family, or in every tribe, they esteemed skill in playing on the harp beyond any kind of learning.

In the evening, when the visitors were arrived, an entertainment was provided according to the number and dignity of the persons, and the wealth of the house; on which occasion the cook was not fatigued with dressing many dishes, nor such as were high seasoned as stimulatives to gluttony; nor was the house

furnished with tables, napkins, or towels; for in all these things they studied nature more than shew. The guests were placed by *threes* at supper, and the dishes at the same time were put on rushes, in large and ample platters made of clean grass, with thin and broad cakes of bread, baked every day. At the same time that the whole family, with a kind of emulation in their civilities, were in waiting; the master and mistress in particular were always standing, very attentively overlooking the whole. When the hour of sleep approached, they all lay down in common on the public bed, ranged lengthwise along the sides of the room; a few rushes being strewed on the floor, and covered only with a coarse cloth, the produce of the country. The same garb that the people were used to wear in the day, served them also in the night; and this consisted of a thin mantle, and a garment or shirt worn next to the skin. The fire was kept burning at their feet throughout the night, as well as in the day.

The women of this nation, as well as the men, had their hair cut round at the ears and eyes. The women also, as a head dress, wore a large white robe, folding round, and rising by degrees into a graceful tuft or crown. Both the men and the women were exceedingly attentive to the preservation of their teeth; by constantly rubbing them with green hazel, probably the leaves or bark, and cleaning them with a woolen cloth, they kept their teeth as white as ivory; and to preserve them still more, they abstained from every kind of hot food. The men were accustomed to shave the whole beard, leaving only a whisker on the upper lip; they likewise cut short or shaved the hair of their heads, that it might be no impediment to their activity in passing through the thick woods and forests that covered their country.

The Welsh, according to Giraldus, were a people of an acute and subtle genius. In civil causes and actions, they exerted

all the powers of rhetoric; and, in the conduct of these, their talents for insinuation, invention, and refutation, were conspicuous. In rhythmical songs, and in extemporary effusions, they are said to be excellent, both in respect to invention and elegance of style; and for these purposes bards were appointed: but, beyond all other rhetorical ornaments, they preferred the use of alliteration; and that kind, more especially, which repeats the first letters or syllables of words. They made so much use of this ornament in every finished discourse, that they thought nothing elegantly spoken without it.

In private company, or in seasons of public festivity, they were very facetious in their conversation, with a view of entertaining the company, and displaying their own wit. And persons of lively parts, sometimes in mild, and sometimes in sarcastic terms, under the cover of a double meaning, by a peculiar turn of voice, or by the transposition of words,

were continually uttering humorous or satirical expressions.

The lowest of the people, as well as the chieftains, were indebted to nature for a certain boldness in speech, and an honest confidence, in giving answers to great men on matters of business, or in the presence of princes.

There were among the Welsh certain persons whom they called *Awenyddion*, a word expressive of poetical raptures. These persons, when consulted about any thing doubtful, inflamed with a high degree of enthusiasm, were, to all appearance, carried out of themselves, and seemed as if they were possessed by an invisible spirit. Yet they did not immediately declare a solution of the difficulty required; but, by the power of wild and inconsistent circumlocution, in which they abounded, any person, who observed the answer, would at length, by some turn or digression in the speech, receive, or fancy

that he did, an explanation of what he sought. From this state of ecstacy they were at last roused, as from a deep sleep; and were compelled, as it were, by the violence of others, to return to their natural state. Another thing, it is said, was peculiar to these persons; that when they recovered their reason, they did not recollect any of those things which in their ecstacy they had uttered. And if it happened that they were again consulted about the same or any other thing, they would be certain to express themselves in other and far different words. This property was bestowed upon them, as they fancied, in their sleep: at which time, according to Giraldus, it appeared to some of them as if new milk or honey was poured into their mouths; to others, as if a written scroll had been put into their mouths; and on their awaking, they publicly professed that they had been endowed with these extraordinary gifts. This imaginary spirit of divination has been also in much usage in the highlands

of Scotland, and is there known under the expressive term of *Second Sight.*

Pride of ancestry, and nobility of family, were points held in the highest estimation among the Welsh; and of course they were far more desirous of noble than of rich and splendid marriages. So deeply rooted was this spirit, that even the very lowest of the people carefully preserved the genealogy of their families, and were able, from memory, to recite the names, not only of their immediate ancestors, but to the sixth and seventh generation, and even to trace them still farther back, in this manner: Rhys ap Gryffydh, ap Rhys, ap Tewdwr, ap Einion, ap Owen, ap Howel, ap Cadell, ap Roderic the Great.*

A Welshman was considered as honourable, if among his ancestors there had been neither slave, nor foreigner, nor in-

* The royal line of South Wales.

famous person.* Yet if any foreigner had saved the life of a Welshman, or delivered him from captivity, he might be naturalized, and was entitled to the rights of Welshmen. And any foreign family, having resided in Wales for four generations, were also admitted to the same privileges.†

The love which they felt for family connexions was eager and warm; and, of consequence, they were keen in their resentments, and revenged deeply any injury committed on their family, either of blood or dishonour. They were vindictive and cruel in their anger, and exceedingly prompt to revenge, not only recent injuries, but those which had been committed a long time past, and even in a remote period. What spread still farther this spirit of revenge was a custom prevalent among the Welsh of sending their children to be nursed in other families.

* Howel Dda's Laws. † Ibid.

These families, in consequence, took under their protection the children they had fostered; and always considered it as a high obligation on themselves to promote their interests, and to revenge their injuries. This custom, it is probable, principally prevailed in the families of chieftains and princes.*

The Welsh did not reside in cities, villages, or camps, but, in general, led a solitary life in the woods.

On the borders of their forests, it was usual, not to raise great palaces, nor sumptuous houses, built with stone, but only to twist together ozier coverings, suited to the different seasons of the year, with as little labour as expence. But these dwellings must certainly have been confined to the lower orders of the people. They were accustomed neither to orchards nor gardens. Their fields were

* Hist. of Gwedir Family.

mostly in pasture, little cultivated, seldom ploughed, and scarcely ever sown or planted. Yet the Welsh, sensible of the great utility of agriculture, instituted a kind of ploughing society, which consisted of persons who contributed oxen, and implements of husbandry, for the purpose of tilling a stipulated quantity of ground. To this useful design great encouragement was given by the Welsh laws.* To their ploughs and carts they sometimes joined two oxen, but more frequently made use of four; the driver going before, and, what is very singular, usually walking backwards; and on that account, if the oxen were not properly trained to the yoke, he was exposed to great danger. They made very little use of the scythe or sickle either to mow or reap, but employed a singular kind of instrument, a middle-sized iron, in the shape of a pruning knife, chained loosely at each end to two staves.

* Hoel Dda's Laws.

They used likewise small boats * made of ozier for the purpose of fishing, or of passing rivers. These were not of an oblong form, had not any beaks, but were made nearly round, or rather of a triangular shape; and were covered both in the inside and on the outside with raw skins. The boats were so light, that the fishermen usually carried them on their shoulders.

The Welsh were first instructed in the Christian faith by Faganus and Damianus; who were sent by Eleutherius the bishop of Rome, at the request of king Lucius: From this period to the time when St. Germain was sent into Britain on account of the pelagian doctrine, no heretical opinions were to be found in Wales. Agreeably to the doctrines received from that missionary, they gave to the poor a part of the bread which was served up

* These kind of boats are still used in Wales, and are called corricles.

at the altar; and they sat down to table by *threes* in honour of the Trinity. Whenever they met any person in a religious habit, such as a monk, or clerk; they immediately threw down their hands, bowed their heads, and begged his blessing. To mark the religious spirit of his countrymen still more, Giraldus says, that the Welsh were more eager to obtain episcopal confirmation, and the chrism, by which the spirit was given, than any other nation. They gave the tenth of all that they possessed of animals, sheep, and sometimes of cattle, in the following cases; whenever they engaged in a military marriage; when they first set out on a pilgrimage; or, by the remonstrance of the church, whenever they made any amendment in their lives. This division of their property they called the Great Tythe; two parts of which they bestowed on their own baptismal church, and a third was given to the bishop of the diocese. The pilgrimage which above all others was deemed most sacred by the Welsh, was a journey

to Rome. They paid also great reverence to churches, and to the clergy; to the relicts of saints, to their portable bells, to text books, and to the cross.*

From this spirit of superstitious piety, very peculiar privileges of sanctuary have been given to the Welsh churches. Not only in cemeteries or burial places, but within the precincts of certain boundaries appointed by the bishop, all animals had the liberty of feeding in perfect security. The larger churches, endowed with greater privileges on account of their antiquity, extended their bounds of sanctuary still farther; as far as the cattle could go in the morning and return at night. So

* As a proof of the religious spirit which about this time prevailed, three thousand Welsh, the most expert in archery and in the use of the pike, engaged to go into the Holy Land, at the instance of the archbishop of Canterbury; who, accompanied by Giraldus Cambrensis, preached the Croisades in the year 1188 throughout Wales. Giraldus Camb. Itinerarii Camb. cap. XIII. p. 226.

sacred were the privileges of sanctuary, that if any person, at enmity with his sovereign, sought the refuge of the church; his own person, his family, and all his property remained in the most perfect security. If any attempt was made to violate the sanctuary, it appears, that the parties under its protection, might retaliate the injury even on the prince himself, and might commit depredations in the country.*

It was necessary on the accession of the king, that the proprietors of ecclesiastical lands should appear before him, to lay open their rights and privileges; to whom,

* Thus far from Giraldus Cambrensis, (Cambriæ Descriptio, from p. 254 to 275) a learned monk, who lived in the reign of Henry the second, and was a native of South Wales. In this detail of manners, the author has given a little more than a simple transcript of Giraldus, with scarcely any variations of his own: under the idea that such delineations, struck off by the pencil of a contemporary, would appear more pleasing in their original colours, and native simplicity.

if their claims were just, he confirmed those privileges, and the rights of sanctuary.* If any offender fled to sanctuary, and an action was instituted against him, neither the abbot nor monks could protect him, until he had made satisfaction for his offence: if no such action was brought, they were then to conduct him to the place in which he was to remain.† If any person, taking refuge in a sanctuary, committed any criminal act, he lost the privileges of that asylum, and was obliged to fly into another sanctuary, or to forfeit all his property to the religious place whose protection he had violated. If any person, carrying about him the relics of saints, committed a crime under their protection, he was not entitled to any privileges on their account; and in such case, likewise, he forfeited all his goods to that asylum, unless he had already procured another.‡ Any person, who had taken sanctuary, might freely go about the cemetry, and the court of the

* Howel Dda's Laws. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

church, without carrying relics, and his cattle might feed with those of the monastery, and remain in security, as far as the herds of the monastery were allowed to go. Disputes concerning the property of lands, when both parties were ecclesiastics, were not cognisable by the Welsh laws.*

If the king granted a licence to build a church in any village, whose inhabitants were villains, to which a cemetry was assigned, and priests were appointed to celebrate mass, the village from that time became free.† The hermits and other *Ascetics*, in this country, were, in a peculiar degree, austere in the habits of mortification, and, according to Giraldus, were more spiritualised in their piety than the religious of any other nation. The same writer sums up the character of his countrymen in a manner equally peculiar and decisive. He says that, as it was the disposition of that people to pursue every object with vehemence, none

* Howel Dda's Laws. † Ibid.

were elsewhere to be found so bad as the worst, nor any better than the good, among the Welsh.*

It was natural that a warlike people would employ their leisure, during the short intervals of peace, in the habits of domestic festivity, or in the pleasures of the field. A variety of exercises, some more violent, others more gentle, in their nature, were in common use among the Welsh. Of these, many of which were the more peculiar diversions of men, were feats of strength, namely, pitching a bar of iron, throwing a sledge, a large stone, or quoits, running, leaping, swimming, wrestling, riding, archery, and throwing the javelin, fencing with sword and buckler, the two-handed sword, and playing with the quarter staff. There were several other diversions considered as rural sports, and as less manly, such as hunting, fishing, and bird-hunting; besides which, sundry others were used in fami-

* Giraldus Cambrensis, p. 275.

lies, as private amusements, and considered as literary, such as poetry, playing on the harp, reading Welsh, singing poems, accompanied by stringed instruments, singing an ode of four parts, and accenting it with proper expression, heraldry, and embassy. Other amusements were in use of a more sedate kind, which employed their more tranquil hours; chess, draughts, and back-gammon, or some similar game, dice, and tuning the harp. Besides these, there were various modes of hunting, distinguished in the following manner. Hunting the stag, pursuing a swarm of bees, and taking salmon; these three were deemed common diversions. Hunting the bear, the squirrel, or martin, and the cock of the wood,* were called barking diversions. Hunting the fox, the hare, and the roebuck,† were distinguished as clamorous ones. The stag was

* See Mr. Pennant's Journey to Snowdon.

† Iwrch, or roebuck; said to have been formerly in Wales. See Richards's Welsh Dictionary on that word, and Gibson's notes on Camden, p. 645.

hunted with hounds and greyhounds; and this was called a common diversion, because every person who was at his death had a right to a share: even if a man on his journey happened to pass by at the time that the stag was killed, he was entitled, by the game laws, to a share, in common with those who had hunted him down. A swarm of bees was likewise considered as a common property; for whoever found them on his own, or on other people's land, unless he put a mark that he had first found them, every person who passed by had a right to enjoy a share; but a fourth part belonged to the proprietor of the ground. The salmon were also considered in the same light; for when they were caught with a net, or struck with a spear, or taken in any other way, whatever person should come to the place, before a division was made, was entitled to a part, provided the salmon was taken out of a common water.

Hunting the bear was called a barking diversion, because, from its slowness, the

hunting of it could be of no long continuance, as it was only baited, barked at, and killed. The martin,* fitchet, polecat,† and squirrel, not being able to run far, climbed up into trees; and, in that situation, were barked at and baited by the dogs. Hunting the cock of the wood‡ was entirely similar.

Fox-hunting was called a clamorous diversion, as, in the pursuit of this animal, there was much crying of the dogs, and blowing of the horn. Of the same nature were the diversions of roebuck and hare hunting.

The game that was most in esteem for the use of the table was the stag, the hare, the wild boar, and the bear. If greyhounds were let loose after a stag, or any other animal, and the dogs pursued him out of sight, and he was afterwards

* Bela. † Câthgoed.

‡ See Mr. Pennant's Journey to Snowdun.

killed, then the foremost greyhound in the last view was entitled to the skin. If a man or a dog started a hare out of her seat, and killed her, she was the property of either the one or the other.

It was necessary that every person who carried a horn should be acquainted with the nine game laws. If he was unable to give an account of them, he forfeited his horn. Whoever went out a hunting with couples, forfeited those likewise, if he was found deficient in a knowledge of the said laws; but, whimsically enough, the couples were safe, if placed on his arm. No person could let loose a greyhound after any animal, which the hounds were then hunting, unless he himself had hounds that were hunting at the same time; and on any person so offending, the man who was pursuing the hare, might hamstring the greyhound. No one was allowed to shoot a beast, when at rest, that was appropriated for the chase, on pain of forfeiting his bow and arrows to the lord of the manor; though he might shoot at and

kill any such, if he could, when the dogs were in full cry; but he was not allowed to shoot among the dogs. If any person went out to hunt, and let his dogs loose after the beast; and it so happened that he was met with and killed by some straggling dogs, the animal was then the property of the first dogs, unless the straggling ones belonged to the king. Any beast which had been hunted, became the property of the first hunter, unless his face was turned towards home, and his back on the dogs. If his dogs were still hunting, and the hunter had left them, the animal did not in that case belong to him, if killed by straggling dogs, but to the owner of the latter.*

Some light may be thrown on the ancient administration of Wales, by laying

* See an account of the Welsh games, printed at the end of Dr. Davies's Dictionary. He died in the year 1644; he was himself a native of Wales, and was much esteemed by his countrymen, for his knowledge of its language and antiquities.

open the various conditions, on which the Welsh held their estates under their princes, or immediate lords; and by shewing in what manner the revenue, arising from those tenures, was directed to the splendour, or support of their government.

We shall begin, by marking the smaller divisions, which at that time, it is probable, had taken place in the country. In the lesser divisions, Wales might have been originally divided into *Bôds*, *Trevs*, and *Caers*. The *Bôd* is supposed to have been the mansion-house of a chieftain on his first settlement in the country; the lands which he assigned for the maintenance of his dependents in the increasing colony to have been called a *Trev;* and the inclosure of such lands, for defence or convenience, whether formed of wood or of stone, might have been denominated a *Caer.** An assemblage of several *bôds* formed a *trev* or township; a hundred of these *trevs*

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 28, 29 31.

constituted a *cantrev.* For the more easy and regular dispatch of business, a *cantrev* was divided into two or more *commots;* each of which, consisting of a certain number of *bods* and *trevs,* formed a distinct precinct; and was considered as a lordship, possessing a separate court and jurisdiction.*

The Welsh princes, and other lords of particular territories, were the proprietors *in capite* of all lands; and were sovereign lords of all their subjects and bondmen. To these, the princes or the lords distributed townships, or particular tenures called Weles, seats or dwellings; by way of martial distribution, on such conditions as those lords or princes thought proper to impose. The lands or tenures so granted, were either freeholds or villanage; and the persons to whom they were given were called freeholders or vassals; each were equally tenants to their lord; though in

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 116.

respect of privileges originally granted, they were in possession of different degrees of freedom or vassalage. Some of these were entirely free, and others were entirely bond; some townships in part were free, and in part were bond. In these several townships, a greater or less degree of freedom prevailed, or none at all; the tenants of the first kind of vassalage were called *nativi liberi;* that is, free natives, or the better sort of vassals; and the others were considered as *puri nativi*, or perfect slaves.

Those lands or townships which were entirely free, gave to the possessors a rank above other tenants; qualified them for offices and employments, and entitled them likewise to a seat and a voice in courts of judicature. From this privilege of sittiug higher than the other tenants, in their *Gorseddau*, and of assisting in giving sentence, and passing judicial decrees, the tenants of these freeholds were called *Uchelwyr*. The king excepted,

there was an equality among the Welsh nobility.*

The tenants of bond lands, and villages, being inferior to freeholders, were bound to servile employments; and in many things were at the disposal of their princes or lords. A lord had the privilege of parting with his vassal either by sale or donation. There was, however, a distinction in point of privilege between such tenants. The free natives were those who possessed some degree of freedom; who might go where they pleased, might buy and sell, and enjoyed many other immunities. The pure natives were considered as the entire property of their princes or lords; were sold along with the estate, and confined within its limits; out of which, if they happened to wander, they were liable to be driven back like wild beasts with great severity.† The profession of any of the mechanic or liberal arts made a vassal

* Howel Dda's Laws. † Rowland's Mona, p. 121.

free; but no vassal could acquire them without the permission of his lord.*

The *trevs* were not all of equal dimension; some were of a larger and others of a lesser extent; but they were all subject to certain conditions to be paid to their lords, which were rated and fixed at the first disposal of those tenures. These were rents, services, duties, mulcts, and attendances. Such were their great sources of revenue and of power; and from which the Welsh princes were enabled to support their dignity, to secure the loyalty of their subjects, and afford protection to the state.†

The rents of some tenures were paid in money; those of others were paid in goods and in cattle. Rents in money were fixed to be paid, either at the four quarterly payments, or the two half-yearly ones; or

* Howel Dda's Laws.

† Rowland's Mona, p. 131.

they arose out of casualties, such as reliefs and heriots. The rents which were paid in goods and cattle were a certain quantity of corn paid at stated times, or a certain number of oxen and cows, which many *trevs* were obliged to pay at the end of the year. The *Tunc* rent was a sum of money, payable by four villain townships in every *commot*, of five shillings a year, cessable on particular *trevs*. Rents of some kind or other were originally fixed to be cessable on all tenures, whether free or bond, similar to the English soccage tenures.

The freeholder had a legal right in the property of his land, on the performance of the stipulated conditions; but that right might be forfeited, in certain cases, to the prince, or lord of the fee.

The villains or vassals, who were the tenants of the villanages, had no property in the lands assigned them, but enjoyed only the occupancy and possession of them

during the pleasure of the prince or lord; they being considered only as slaves, to be placed in any situation at the will of their masters. They paid, however, a rent to their lord. And those rents which were charged on villain tenures were precise and stated, and payable, as the rents of freeholds were, on certain and fixed days.*

The nature of those services, which the several *trevs*, or the particular tenures in every manor, were obliged to perform, is here attempted to be explained. In general, the prince had a *Llys*, or palace, in every *cantrev*; a chapel likewise, with the necessary appendages of mills, offices, and other conveniences. In support of these, the services of tenants in the *cantrev*, where the palace was built, were appropriated in various ways, and the lands belonging to the palace were parcelled out to tenants, on the conditions of performing

* Rowland's Mona, p. 122, 123.

such private and domestic services. Those tenants were called, in many places, *Gwyr Mael*, *Gwyr tîr y Porth*, and *Gwyr Gwaith*. The service under the title of *Gwyr Mael* is supposed to have been the prince's local guard, who were obliged to arm themselves, and to keep watch and ward about the palace. The service bearing the name of *Gwyr tîr y Porth* was to cultivate the corn lands reserved by the prince in every manor for his corn provision. The duty implied by *Gwyr Gwaith* was an obligation on particular tenants of working for the prince at their own charge. The remaining tenants were obliged to repair the walls of the palace, or the hall, the chapel, or other appendages of the prince's house. In every *cantrev*, there were some tenants bound by their tenures to carry stones or corn, to repair the roof of a mill, the walls, and the water-course; to carry large stones and pieces of timber for the uses of the mill. Some tenants, also, by their tenures, were obliged to repair weirs, to carry wattles and brush-

wood, to hedge about warrens, and some to attend the offices of the larder and kitchen.*

The duties which were due from other tenants, whether free or bond, to the prince or the lord, were various, and both of a civil and military nature. They were obliged to appear in the court of the prince, whenever they received a summons; which, without great peril, they could not disobey. They were under obligation to appear in the court of the *cantrev* in which they resided. Their appearance was equally necessary in the county court.† This was their great court of common pleas, and of high authority: its jurisdiction extended over the whole district. They were obliged to grind their corn at a particular mill, and to pay, as a grist-toll, the thirtieth part; which appears to have been very considerable, when it is considered that the repairs of

* Rowland, p. 124, 125.

† So Rowland calls it.

the mill lay entirely upon the tenants. Those who were not concerned in these repairs were yet obliged to make and to clear the water-courses belonging to it, besides the different kinds of carriage that were imposed on them, especially the conveyance of corn, which was for the use, or was the immediate property of the prince.

The tenants in common were obliged to array, and to follow the prince to war, whenever they were summoned for that purpose. This was a general obligation, equally imposed on the nobility, and on the people at large. The same duties were likewise due from the tenants of inferior districts to their respective and immediate lords. This obligation of attending their prince or lord in war was not equal upon all: some tenants were only liable to go for a limited time, and to a limited place; while others were obliged to give their attendance during the war, without any limitation, equipped and maintained at their own expence. This

duty, so indefinite and peremptory, was called *Gwaith Milwyr*; and, no doubt, was a kind of knight's service.*

There were five other duties, of a civil nature, incident to particular tenures. The nature of those duties are not certainly known at this distance of time; but they may perhaps be explained in the following manner: The courts of the Welsh princes being ambulatory, removing from manor to manor, and not fixed to any certain place; their houses, likewise, being insufficient to hold the numerous retinue which usually attended the prince; it is reasonable to suppose that a suitable provision was every where made for their reception and maintenance. The tenants of that manor, in which the prince came to reside for a certain time, were obliged, of course, to receive and to support so many of the prince's officers and servants, as each of them was under the obligation of performing, agreeably

* Rowland's Mon. p. 126.

to the conditions stipulated in their respective tenures. Such, it is probable, was the duty called *Cylch Stalon*, of entertaining the prince's grooms, and finding provision for so many of his horses, for such a time, and by such tenants of the manor, as were specified in the tenures of each. So, likewise, *Cylch Rhaglon* was the obligation of entertaining the prince's steward by such and so many of the tenants as were obliged, each in his turn, to receive that officer. *Cylch Hebogyddion* was another duty of providing for the prince's falconers and his hawks. *Cylch Greorion*, as it was called, was the obligation of entertaining by turns on each tenant, for a limited time, the keepers of the prince's live stock and cattle; such, it is probable, as were designed for slaughter, for the use of the royal household, while the prince resided in the manor. This was afterwards commuted for, by the payment of a certain sum of money called *Arian Greorion*. The last duty, stiled *Cylch Dowrgon*, was the obligation on certain tenants, by turns, to receive and pro-

vide for the huntsman and his dogs, during the prince's residence, or when he came for the purpose of hunting in any *trev* or manor. It is probable that when the prince of Wales did not make his progress among his tenants at the usual times, they paid him, in lieu of such duties, a sum of money, which was called *Arian Gwestva*.*

Three species of mulcts were another source of revenue arising to the prince, and incident to particular tenures. *Amwobr* was a mulct of five or ten shillings, payable by particular *trevs* and *gavels*, for the incontinency of women.† It was also a fine anciently paid to the prince or lord of the fee at the marriage of a vassal's daughter.‡

Obediw was a sum of money rated on

* Rowland's Mon. p. 128, 129. Dr. Davies's Dictionary on the word *gwestva*.

† Rowland, p. 129.

‡ Dr. Davies's Dictionary on the word *amwobr*.

several *trevs*, and payable to the prince or chief lord, as a mortuary for the death of a tenant. This was sometimes called *Obediw Dietifedd*, when a sum of money was payable to the prince or lord for a tenant dying without issue. *Gwobr* was a mulct of ten shillings paid to the prince or lord on the marriage of a vassal's daughter. This is said to be a commutation in lieu of that barbarous custom that was in use in the times of Paganism, of the right which the lord had of deflouring a virgin on the first night of her marriage with a vassal.*

As the lower sorts of people were liable to perform certain services to their prince or lord, so the nobility were bound, by the express conditions of their respective fees, to pay attendance to their sovereign prince. This attendance was different, according to the several occasions of the prince, in peace or in war. These lords had likewise under them freehold and

* Rowland, p. 130.

vassal tenants, over whom they themselves were lords in fee. Depending on those conditions, the nobility had offices and trusts, both civil and military, conferred upon them, as well as titles that were ministerial and honorary.* The family of Hwfa ap Cynddelw, of Presaddfed in Anglesey, held their estates in fee, on the condition of attending the prince's coronation, and of bearing up the right side of the canopy over his head. The bishop of Bangor likewise enjoyed some advantage, by his peculiar office of crowning the prince, and of being his principal chaplain. In the same manner, most of the nobility were bound to particular attendances by the express conditions of their land tenures, besides those particular duties which they in general were obliged to perform, as subjects by homage and fealty. When properly summoned, if the nobility neglected to perform these conditions, their estates were liable to forfeiture, and their persons to be banished

* Rowland, p. 130.

the realm. This mode of punishment, by banishing the offender, was most commonly used by the Welsh princes.*

There were many tenures in Wales† which were held of neither prince nor lord, but under certain saints, or patrons of churches; the tenants of which lands called themselves abbots. As most of these saints had the privileges of sanctuary originally established in them, it is probable that one condition of those tenures was to maintain and support these places of refuge, and the persons protected in them; and likewise to see that their privileges, with other rights thereunto belonging, were, from time to time, preserved and kept inviolate.‡

* Rowland's Mon. p. 131.

† These notices of the several divisions of the country are taken from the reports given in upon oath by those men, who were appointed by Edward the First for ascertaining the prince's rights, and the tenures in Wales.

‡ Rowland's Mon. p. 132.

The princes of Wales usually wore on their bonnets or helmets a coronet of gold, being a broad lace or headband indented upwards, and set with precious stones.*

From the few traits which are here given of the private manners and customs of the ancient Welsh, we may form a lively idea of their genius, and may also discriminate what was peculiar in their national character. Hence, too, we are enabled to account for a variety of splendid actions which strike our wonder, and interest our feelings for the fate of a brave people, who were so often thrown into situations, sudden and rapid in their changes, and which appear to be singular in the history of nations.

* Welsh Chron. p. 36. The illegitimate children of the princes of Wales were not allowed to bear their father's arms; and if permitted, yet not without carrying on them some marks of peculiarity. British Ant. revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 31.

There was something in the Saxon character, so little susceptible of those impressions which polish and humanize the rudest natures, that even at this period they retained their native barbarism. And as the Welsh, confined in narrow limits, were scarcely considered as objects of fear, the Saxon princes turned their arms against each other;* giving their enemies the vindictive consolation of seeing the miseries of war retaliated on themselves. These calamities were likewise increased by the Danes; who began, about this
A. D. 801. time, to infest the coast of Britain.† And the Welsh, no doubt, would have seen with pleasure the effects of a storm, beginning to burst upon the heads of their enemies, if they themselves had not been equally liable to the danger. But as a means of security, warned by the fatal remissness of the Saxons, they with great

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 13.

† Verstegan, chap. VI. p. 155. Welsh Chron. p. 20. Saxon Chron. p. 64.

secrecy and diligence increased their naval force; reasonably expecting by such a force to repel the Danish invasions; or, it is probable, in case of necessity they might hope to secure a retreat.*

In the course of their incursions the city of St. David was laid in ashes by the Saxons; and that event was preceded by an eclipse of the sun and moon; a terrible distemper likewise seized upon cattle;† A. D 808.
and the next year the city of Diganwy was destroyed by lightning.‡ These incidents, arising from natural causes, were marked by superstition as presages of national calamity. From this time,§ Diganwy ceased to be the residence of the kings of North Wales.

In right of that equal distribution of property which took place in Wales by the custom of gavel kind, Howel, the

* Berkeley's Naval Hist. p. 61.
† Welsh Chron. p. 21.
‡ Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 66.
§ Ibid. p. 67.

younger son of the late king Roderic Moelwynoc, laid claim to the island of Mona, as his part of his father's inheritance. This claim was disputed by Cynan Tindaethwy, the reigning prince, and his eldest brother; and each side prepared to put it to the decision of arms; but a victory, soon after gained by Howel, gave him the possession of the island. The two princes, the one eager to maintain his patrimony, and the other to recover the territory which had been torn from him, opposed each other a second time; but with the same event, the battle ending in favour of Howel.* Enraged at these defeats, Cynan Tindaethwy was determined, by a vigorous effort, at every hazard of his crown and life, to recover the island and the reputation of his arms. In pursuance of this resolution, he raised an

A. D. 817. army and marched against his brother; but Howel, seeing himself unable to oppose a force superior to his own, withdrew from the conflict, and escaped to the

* Welsh Chron. p. 21, 22.

island of Man; leaving Mona in the possession of the conqueror.*

Cynan Tindaethwy did not long enjoy the fruits of his good fortune; for he died soon after, and left the kingdom of North Wales to Essyllt, his daughter; married to Mervyn Vrych, the king of Man, and a descendant, by the maternal line, from the house of Powys.†

On the death of the late prince, Mervyn Vrych and Esyllt, suceeeded to the sovereignty of North Wales;‡ annexing the Island of Man to their other dominions §

In the early part of their reign, ‖ Egbert king of the West Saxons invaded Wales with a powerful army; desolated the coun- A. D. 819.

* Welsh Chron. p. 22. † Ibid. p. 22.

‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 188. § Ibid. p. 173.

‖ Math. Westm. p. 224, 227, recites three different invasions of Wales by Egbert, in which he subdued that country, and made its kings tributary, A. D. 810, 811, 830.

try as far as the mountains of Snowdun,* and seised on the lordship of Rhyvonioc.† He then advanced to Mona, and took possession of that island, having fought a bloody battle with the Welsh at Llanvaes near Beaumaris;‡ and though the island was soon recovered by king Mervyn, and the Saxons were driven out, it lost at this period the ancient name of Mona; and was afterwards by the English called Anglesey, or the Englishmen's Isle.§ This formidable inroad was no sooner over, as if the Welsh were to enjoy no interval of peace, than Kenulph, king of Mercia, in two successive inroads, committed great devastation in West Wales and in Powys.‖

The valour and the policy of Egbert, at this period, had united the Saxon hep-
A. D. 828. tarchy into one kingdom.¶ And such an union, under a vigorous administration,

* *Yryri* in the Welsh, signifying mountains of snow. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 65.

† Welsh Chron. p. 24, 25. ‡ Ibid.

§ Rowland Mon. Ant. p. 172, 173.

‖ Chron. of Wales, p. 25.

¶ Fabian, p. 184. Rowland Mon. Ant. p. 172.

might have proved fatal to the Welsh; if the attention of the Saxon prince had not been diverted from foreign conquests to the security of his own territories. To consolidate more closely the various parts of his dominions, he gave to the whole of his new kingdom the common name of England;* and at this juncture, every species of union was necessary to oppose the formidable and increasing invasions of the Danes. A large body of these people landed about this time in West Wales;† and such was the animosity of the Welsh, and such the wretched alternative left them, that they united with the Danes in a common interest, as the less and more distant evil, to wreak their vengeance upon the Saxons, and to establish the Danish power on the ruin of more immediate and hereditary enemies.

A. D. 833.

The Welsh, in consequence of this alliance, joined their forces with the Danes;

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 13. Verstegan, c. V. p. 125.

† Grafton's Chron. p. 132. Chron. of Wales, p. 27.

and, after having ravaged a great part of his dominions, and destroyed many of his castles and fortified towns, they fought a severe battle with the Saxon prince upon Hengist Down; but, in this action they sustained a terrible defeat, with the slaughter of a great part of their
A. D. 835. army.* Incensed at this invasion, and alarmed at the consequence of such alliances in future, Egbert made war upon the Welsh, and invested the city of Chester; determined that they should feel the utmost effects of his resentment and power. This city had hitherto remained in the possession of the Welsh,† and was regarded as an important post upon the frontier. It was taken at this time by Egbert.‡ Among other marks of his indignation against the very memory of the Britons, he gave orders that the brazen statue of Cadwallon should be taken down

* Saxon Chron. p. 72. Math. Westm. p. 227.
† Chron. of Wales, p. 27.
‡ Grafton's Chron. p. 132. Fabian, p. 184.

and defaced;* he likewise issued a proclamation, that all the men, with their wives and children, who were descended from British blood, should depart his territories in six months, on pain of death;† and to add injury to insult, he made another law, as savage as it was unavailing; which affixed the penalty of death to every Welshman, who passed the limits of Offa's Dyke, and should be taken on the English borders.‡ More coersive restraints were necessary than such a feeble barrier and futile law, though the hand of power had drawn an arbitrary line, which insulted the feelings, and entrenched on the rights of a warlike and irascible people.

This Saxon prince died soon after the A D.
siege of Chester; and his death probably 838.
suspended for several ages the destiny of Wales.

* Stowe's Chron. p. 77.

† Chron. Wales, p. 27, from Ranulph Cestr.

‡ Speed's Chron. p. 318, from Joa. Beverlensis.

A short cessation of the Danish inroads gave leisure to Berthred, the tributary sovereign of Mercia, to renew hostilities against the Welsh; * and a severe battle was fought by the two princes, at a place called Kettel, upon the frontiers; in which Mervyn, the king of North Wales was
A. D. 843. slain; who left his eldest son, named Roderic, to succeed to his dignity.†

The prospect now opens under a new point of view; the memorable reign of Roderic. This young prince succeeded to his father's throne with a greater extent of territory than had fallen to the share of any Cambrian Sovereign—He enjoyed, by the right of his father and mother, the sovereignty of the Island of Man, with the territories of North Wales and Powys; and having married Angharad the heiress of South Wales, of course the whole province of Cambria centered in his

* Saxon Chron. p. 75.

† Welsh Chron. p. 27, 28.

person.* The firmness resulting from this union, the nature of the country and valour of the inhabitants, their inveteracy against the Saxons, and the perilous situation of that people, were important advantages which opened with the reign of Roderic. If this fortunate combination of circumstances had been directed agreeably to a wise policy, it would probably have secured the independency of Wales; and have fixed its government upon a basis so solid and permanent, that it might have sustained the storms of ages; and have fallen at length amidst the ruins of time, unless undermined by the refinements and luxury, of a bordering, a more civilized and powerful people.

Instead of taking advantage of this fortunate conjuncture, a crisis which will never more return in the annals of Wales, a fatal and irreparable measure took place. For Roderic, early in his reign, divided his

* Rowland, p. 173, 188. Welsh Chron. p. 35.

dominions into three Principalities; which during his life, were governed by chieftains acting under his authority; and this singular event seems to have arisen from the narrow idea, that the Welsh, accustomed to be ruled by their native princes, ought not to yield obedience to a common sovereign.*

The death of Mervyn Vrych, and the late victory obtained over the Welsh, flattered Berthred the Mercian prince, with the hopes of farther success from the youth and inexperience of Roderic. Agreeable to this design, and strengthened by the aid of Ethulwulph, the king of England, he entered North Wales with a powerful
A. D. 846. army,† and advanced as far as Anglesey; which he laid waste in a cruel manner.‡ The young prince Roderic, on this trying

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p, 174.

† Sim. Dunelme, p. 120, 139. Hist. Angl. Script. Math. Westm. p. 231.

‡ Chron. Wales, p. 35.

occasion, neglected no exertion, which was due to his own honour and to the defence of his country. By the spirited resistance he made, the king of Mercia was prevented from making any great progress in the island: and soon after, fortunately for the Welsh, the attention of that prince was employed in the protection of his own dominions from the power of the Danes.* The inroads of these people increasing every day, the English, fully employed in attending to their own safety, left the Welsh to enjoy many years a season of unusual tranquility.

If Roderic had possessed the qualities of a ttuly great prince, he would at least, at this fortunate period, have attempted to provide against future evils; and the nature of his country, intersected by rivers and fortified with mountains, and almost surrounded by the ocean, might have pointed out the rational means ef defence.

* Simon Dunelme, Ann. 874. Saxon Chron. p. 82. Chron. of Wales, p. 31.

Had this prince made a proper use of the leisure which the troubles in England had given him, he would have placed garrisons in the frontier towns; would have collected magazines, and fortified the passes; and he would have exerted his utmost ability to secure his country from foreign invaders, by forming a naval power; he would also have endeavoured to reduce his subjects to a just subordination, by promoting among them a spirit of union, and a steady obedience to the laws. Instead of these regulations, that period seems to have been distinguished by a total neglect of every measure, which, if steadily pursued, might have given security to his kingdom.

A. D. 872. At this time, Alfred had ascended the throne of England.* Engaged through his reign in affairs of war or legislation, or in introducing into his kingdom learning and the arts, this prince filled every department in the state, and those apper-

* William Malmsbury, lib. II. cap. IV. p. 42.

taining to science, with men of the greatest abilities.* Having founded the university of Oxford, he invited out of Wales two persons distinguished for their learning; John, surnamed Scotus; and Asser, who had been educated in the college of St. David; the former of whom he appointed a professor in the university he had lately established.† And, taught by experience the impolicy of contending with the Danes by land, and the necessity of establishing such a navy as might enable him to oppose them at sea, he engaged in his service many Welshmen acquainted with the art of ship-building, whom he appointed superintendants of the dock yards, and afterwards employed in honourable stations in the fleet.‡

The Danes, having received a repulse in England, and being, by treaty, obliged to relinquish that country, made a de-

* Polydore Virgil, lib. V. p. 106.

† Chron. of Wales, p. 33.

‡ Berkeley's Naval Hist. Brit. p. 69

scent on the island of Anglesey, where, in two battles they met with a very spirited opposition from Roderic; one of which was fought at Bangole, and the A. D. 873. other at Menegid. At the same time, South Wales was invaded by another body of Danes, who desolated that country, and laid the churches and religious houses in ruins.*

About this time, Roderic changed the royal residence from Caer Segont † to Aberffraw in Anglesey. ‡ It is strange that he should desert a country where every mountain was a natural fortress; and, in times of such difficulty and danger, should make choice of a residence so exposed and defenceless.

An interval of quiet from the Danes gave the English another opportunity of making a descent on the island of Angle-

* Welsh Chron. p. 34.

† Near the present town of Caernarvon.

‡ Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 173.

sey, which they invaded with a formidable army. The Welsh king, opposing them with his usual gallantry of spirit, at length fell, in the defence of his country, being slain, with Gwyriad his brother, in one of the battles which he fought with the English, in the course of that expedition.* A. D. 877.

It has been already observed that the late prince, in the course of his reign, had divided his dominions into three distinct sovereignties, which he left to his sons Anarawd, Cadell, and Mervyn.† But, agreeably to the spirit and custom of gavel kind, though each sovereign possessed a distinct authority within his own dominions, yet a pre-eminency over the other princes was established in the kings of North Wales.‡ He ordained that the

* Welsh Chron. p. 35.

† Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 174.

‡ British Antiquities Revived, by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 8, 25, 40. Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 174, 175. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 64, 65.

princes of South Wales and Powys should each of them pay yearly to the sovereign of North Wales a tribute,* called *Maelged*, of sixty-three pounds, as a mark of subordination; † but the royal tribute, or *Teyrnged*, which was due from Cambria to the imperial crown of London, agreeably to the ancient laws, was ordained in future to be paid by the kings of North Wales. ‡ Regarding, likewise, his eldest son Anarawd as the immediate heir of the *Cynethian* line, he left to him, and to his successors, the titles of *Brenhin Cymru Oll*, or the king of all Wales. §

* These tributes, according to Vaughan of Hengwrt, in Brit. Ant. Reviv. p. 39, 40, were paid in the following manner:—The kings of North Wales were to pay £63 to the crown of London, the princes of Powys four tons of flour, and the princes of South Wales four tons of honey, to the sovereigns of North Wales.

† H. Lhuyd, p. 64, 65. Rowland, p. 175.

‡ Ibid.

§ Rowland, p. 174, 175.

To cement more closely, in a common interest, his sons, and their successors, he enjoined that if any two of these princes should happen to differ about their particular interests, in such case, the third should interfere, and should finally arbitrate the matter.* It was ordained that if any difference should arise between the princes of North and South Wales, they should all meet at Bwlch-y-Pawl, in the present county of Montgomery; and the prince of Powys was appointed the umpire. If the princes of North Wales and Powys should be at variance, they were all to assemble at Morva-Rhianedd, on the banks of the Dee, and the prince of South Wales was to determine the controversy. If the dispute should arise between the princes of Powys and South Wales, the meeting was appointed to be held at Llys Wen, upon the river Wye, and the matter in contention was to be decided by the king of North Wales.†

* Rowland, p. 175.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 35.

Roderic must have been little acquainted with human nature, to imagine that such regulations were sufficient to counteract, at a distant period, the wild passions and ambition of princes.

Other institutions better marked the strength and liberality of his mind. He ordained that if their separate territories should be invaded by a foreign enemy, the three Welsh princes were in that case to assist, and to afford mutual protection to each other; that castles and other strong holds should be fortified and kept in repair; that the churches and religious houses should be rebuilt and adorned; that the British history should be faithfully transcribed and enlarged; and that the archives of Britain, the monuments of her glory, should be carefully deposited in the monasteries of Wales.*

From such attentions as these, or perhaps from a comparison with the other

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 35.

Welsh princes, in extent of dominion, and in personal ability, Roderic hath gained from p sterity the surname of *Great.* If to produce the wealth and grandeur, the security and happiness, of a state, be the means of obtaining such a title, then, surely, the conduct of this prince gave him little claim to that honourable distinction. Instead of acting up to the great design of government, Roderic, without precedent to palliate, or apparent necessity to enforce such a measure, yielded up the independency of Wales; enjoining his posterity, by a solemn rescript, to pay to the Saxon kings, as a mark of subordination, a yearly tribute,—a tribute, though arising out of ancient laws, that was only due from the *Cambrian* to the *British* princes; and which, no doubt, became, from this period, the basis upon which was founded that claim of supremacy ever after asserted by the English. The division which Roderic had made of his dominions was likewise the source of civil dissensions and national weakness, and was soon the cause of a

decline in patriotism, and of a striking barbarity in manners,—a series of evils which successively produced the ruin of their different states, and scarcely ended with the conquest of the Welsh, and after the loss of their political existence.

HISTORY

OF

WALES.

BOOK IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF RODERIC THE GREAT TO THE DEATH OF BLEDDYN AP CYNVYN.

THE present æra opens a new prospect of the history of Wales; in which this country, which, in the late reign, had centered in one sovereign, was divided into three distinct principalities.

Anarawd, the eldest son of Roderic the Great, succeeded to the sovereignty of North Wales.* This territory was the A. D 877.

* Rowland, p. 174.

Venedocia of the Romans,* and was by the Britons called Gwynedd.† The residence of the sovereigns of this district was at Aberffraw in Anglesey, in a palace which had been erected during the life of king Roderic.‡ The kingdom of North Wales, in the four divisions of Anglesey, Arvon,§ Meirionydd, and Perfeddwlad,|| containing fifteen *cantrevs*, subdivided into thirty-eight *commots*,¶ was bounded on the west and north by the Irish sea; on the south-west by the river Dyvi, which separated it from South Wales; and on the south and east was divided from Powys and England by mountains and rivers, particularly by the Dee.** The language spoken in this country is esteemed the most pure, and comes the nearest to that

* Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 64. † Ibid.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 3[illegible]. Rowland, p. 174.

§ Signifying, above Mona.

|| The inward or middle part. Humf. Lhuyd, p. 64, 65.

¶ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 5, 8.

** H. Lhuyd, p. 64.

of the ancient Britons. Its inhabitants, from a variety of causes, preserved their independency longer than the other principalities. Besides the valour of the people, and in general the public virtue of their princes, the natural situation of the country of Snowdun,—a range of mountains extending from one sea to the other, and guarded by two rivers discharging themselves into the ocean at Traeth Mawr and Conway,—formed a rampart exceedingly strong, over which the Welsh usually retreated, when they were pressed by the English arms. The principal defiles likewise which opened through that range of vast mountains were secured by strong fortifications. The castle of Diganwy was placed opposite to the water of Conway, an arm of the sea which opened into the country; that of Caer Rhun was situated at the pass of Bwlch y ddau-vaen, with a fort at Aber; Dolwyddelen castle and a watch tower were placed at Nant Frankon; Dolbadern castle at Nant Peris; and the fort at Cidom was fixed at Nant tal-y-Llyn. The other pass of Traeth Mawr was

guarded by the strong castles of Harlech on one side of the bay, and of Cricieth on the other, with a watch-tower at Cesel Gyfarch, and a fort at Dolbenmaen.* These various fortifications, all of them placed in the most advantageous situations, marked, for a rude age, great military sagacity.

A. D. 877. Cadell, the second son of the late prince, succeeded to the sovereignty of South Wales,† distinguished by the name of Deheubarth, as lying to the south of the other provinces.‡ The residence of the princes of this country was at Dinevawr, § on the banks of the river Towi ‖ in Caermarthenshire; where a palace had been erected by Roderic,¶ in a situation strongly fortified by woods and mountains; and more convenient, on that account, than their ancient abode at

* Rowland's Mon. Ant. p. 148.

† Ibid. p. 174.

‡ Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 64.

§ Dinas Vawr, or the Great Palace. ‖ *Tywi.*

¶ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 34.

Caermarthen, upon the same river, which was probably at this time in the possession of the English.* This district, the *Demetia* of the Romans, was divided into the present counties of Caerdigan, Pembroke, Caermarthen, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecknock: it consisted of twenty-six *cantrevs*, subdivided into eighty-one *commots;*† and was encompassed by the Irish sea, by the Severn, and by the rivers Wye and Dyvi.‡ The continual influx of foreigners into this country hath been the means of debasing the language from its original purity.§

Mervyn, the youngest son of Roderic the Great, succeeded to the principality of Powys.‖ The residence of the princes of this country was at Mathraval in Montgomeryshire; at which place, a palace had been built by the late prince.¶ The principality of Powys, afterwards broken into A. D. 877.

* Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 79.
† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 16, 20.
‡ Humfrey Lhuyd, page 75, 76. § Ibid.
‖ Rowland's Mon. p. 175. ¶ Ibid.

the divisions of Powys Vadoc, and Powys Wenwynwyn,* had fourteen *cantrevs* subdivided into forty *commots*:† it was bounded on the north by North Wales; on the east by the country which lies between Chester and Hereford; on the south by England; and on the west by the river Wye, and by mountains, which divide it from South Wales.‡ The fertility and open situation of this country exposed it to continual invasions: and having more to dread from the arms of the English, than to expect from the regular support of their countrymen, the princes of Powys took an early and frequent part in the interests of England.

Early in the reign of Anarawd, that prince had an opportunity of affording to the northern Britons the like friendly protection which his ancestors had so often received from their countrymen in

* Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 70.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 10, 11.

‡ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 70.

Armorica. The remains of the Strath-Clyde Britons having been harassed by the Danes, Saxons, and Scots; and, after severe conflicts with them, having lost Constantine their king in battle, applied to Anarawd for an asylum in his dominions.* This prince agreed to receive them on the only tenure incident to these turbulent ages, which was to obtain and to preserve a settlement by the power of the sword.

Under the conduct of Hobart, these Britons came into Wales: and having every motive of resentment and interest to urge them to valour, they easily dispossessed the Saxons of that country which is situated between the Dee and the Conway.†

These people remained for a time in quiet possession of their new kingdom, A. D. 878.

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 31.

† Wynne's History Wales, p. 38. Humf. Lhuyd, p. 31, 32.

until Eadred, the earl of Mercia, mortified with the disgrace his arms had sustained, made preparations to recover the country which had been so easily torn from him.* The Britons, having early intelligence of his design, removed their cattle and other valuable effects beyond the river Conway. To support his allies, and to expel from the bosom of his country its hereditary enemies, Anarawd exhibited a spirit and activity suitable to the importance of the occasion: and having encountered the Saxons at Cymryd, about two miles from the town of Conway, by his own gallantry and the bravery of his troops, he gave them an entire defeat. With a pious and honest exultation, the young prince called this memorable action *Dial Rodri*, † expressive of the vengeance he had taken for his father's death.‡ Pursuing their victory, the Welsh followed the Saxons into Mercia, laid

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 38.

† Or Roderic's Revenge.

‡ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 38.

waste their borders, and returned into their own country loaded with valuable spoils.* Anarawd, agreeably to the piety of those days, and to express his gratitude for the late prosperous event, endowed the collegiate church of Bangor, and that of Clynnoc Vawr in Arvon, with lands and great possessions.† These northern Britons, by an unaccountable and singular policy, were allowed to establish a separate state in the vale of Clwyd, in *Rhos*, and in the conquered ‡ country. § Part of this country had been called Tegenia by the Romans, Englefeld by the Saxons, and Tegeingl by the Welsh; but being now united with the other territories, the northern Britons gave to their new kingdom the name of Strath-Clwyd; || part of it being situated on the banks of the river Clwyd.¶

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 38.

† Ibid. Camden's Brit. p. 671.

‡ The country from Conway, along the Dee, to Chester.

§ Welsh Chron. || *Ystrad Clwyd.*

¶ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 69.

Civil dissension, an evil naturally springing out of the conduct of Roderic, and which soon set aside his futile regulations, had already taken roots in the breasts of his sons. For Anarawd, after the late storm was dispersed, probably on account
A. D. 893. of the tribute not having been paid,* united with the English against his brother the prince of South Wales; and with their joint forces, invaded his territory, and laid waste the country of Caerdigan,† and the vale also which borders upon the Wye in Radnorshire.‡

The Danes being obliged to flee before the arms of Alfred, made a descent upon the coast of Wales, and advanced into the country as far as Buellt; § and some time after, being again discomfited by that truly great prince, they laid waste
A. D. 896. the country of Brecknock, and other districts in South Wales.||

* British Ant. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 13.

† Chron. Wales, p. 41. † *Ystradgwy*.

‡ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 41, 42. || Ibid.

A large body of the same people landed again in Anglesey; but this invasion seems only to have been distinguished by a battle fought at Meilon, and by the death of Mervyn, prince of Powys.* A. D. 900.

The fatal policy of Roderic became again conspicuous. Cadell the prince of South Wales, on the death of Mervyn his brother, took possession by force of the principality of Powys; incited by ambition, or the jealousy natural to brothers who enjoy an equal share in their father's dominions and dignity.†

Cadell, the prince of South Wales, dying in this year, was succeeded by his eldest son Howel; who likewise annexed the sovereignty of Powys to his hereditary dignity.‡ A. D. 907.

The city of Chester, which had lain some years in ruins since it had been

* Chron. Wales, p. 42.
† Welsh Chron. p. 35.
‡ Welsh Chron. p. 44, 46.

demolished by the Danes,* was rebuilt and much improved by Elfleda, the wife of the tributary sovereign of Mercia: † she likewise repaired the walls, and en-
A. D. 908. larged their circuit round the castle, which before this time had been situated without the city.‡

A. D. 913. A few years after this event, Anarawd, the king of North Wales died, and left two sons, Edwal Voel, and Elis.

A. D. 913. Edwal Voel, the eldest son of the late prince, succeeded to the sovereignty of North Wales; and was married to the daughter of his uncle Mervyn, the late prince of Powys.§ Early in his reign the Irish made a descent on the island of Anglesey, which they laid waste in a cruel manner. ||

* Saxon Annals, p. 95.

† Math. Westm. Flores Hist. p. 269.

‡ Brompton's Chron. p. 838. Fabian's Chron. p. 224. Printed at London, Ann. Dom. 1559.

§ Brit. Ant. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 4.

|| Welsh Chron. p. 45, 47.

Athelstane the king of England, having in several victories triumphed over the Danes and Scots, marched with an army into Wales; and at Hereford imposed on the princes of that country a yearly tribute of twenty pounds in gold, three hundred pounds in silver, and two thousand five hundred head of cattle, besides a certain number of hawks and hounds.* This arbitrary tribute was no longer regarded by the Welsh, than while the kings of England had the power of enforcing its observance. A. D. 933.

A Welsh chieftain had been imprisoned in England; and his confinement being resented by Edwal Voel, probably as an insult offered to the independency of his crown, that prince, with his brother Elis, attempted by hostilities to revenge the

* Brompton's Chron. p. 838, with respect to the tribute, with the difference only of doubling the number of cattle. Stowe's Chron. p. 82. Welsh Chron. p. 50. Grafton's Chron. p. 149, published Ann. 1569.

A. D. 940. affront; but in the contest they were both slain, fighting against the English and Danes.* The king of North Wales left six sons, Meyric, Jevaf, Jago, Cynan, Edwal and Roderic; and his brother Elis a son called Cynan, and a daughter named Trawst.†

The love of power is an active and commanding principle in man: to obtain and preserve it, he will employ his utmost sagacity, and bend the full force of his various faculties. Even the wise and temperate mind of Howel, prince of South Wales, was not exempt from its influence. The great esteem into which this prince had arisen from a just administration, had probably gained him, some years before, the sovereignty of Powys; and enabled him, at this time, by the accession of
A. D. 940. North Wales, to unite into one kingdom

* Welsh Chron. p. 51.

† Welsh Chron. p. 51. British Antiq. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 14.

the three principalities.* Whether he obtained that dignity, solely, by the efforts of ambition; or was called to it by the voice of the people; or that talents for government, in these disordered times, occasionally set aside the regular course of succession; it is certain, that the sons of the late prince, immediately on their father's death, were superseded by Howel, without any further opposition on their part, than unavailing murmurs and discontent.† Whatever were the means by which he attained to the sovereignty of North Wales; his early attention to the common weal, and the mild tenor of his government, will, in some measure palliate, though it can never vindicate upon any principle of expediency, an act of injustice.

To reduce his subjects to a sense of order, and to render them subordinate to

* Welsh Chron. p. 52.

† Ibid, p. 52.

civil authority, Howel determined to collect into one code the ancient customs and laws of Wales; which, in the lapse of ages, and in the confusion and turbulency of the times, had nearly lost their efficacy and weight. In pursuance of this design, he convened the archbishop of St. David, and other bishops and clergy to the number of one hundred and forty, with the principal chieftains of Wales: out of every *commot* were likewise summoned six persons, distinguished by their talents and virtues. This assembly, forming a great national council, met upon the banks of the Tâf, at the white palace belonging to king Howel.* In order to give the meeting great solemnity, and to implore the Divine Wisdom to influence their counsels, the king himself, with the whole assembly, remained during Lent in the continual exercise of prayer and other acts of devotion. As soon as this solemn preparation was finished, Howel selected

* Welsh Chron. p. 53.

twelve persons who were eminent for wisdom, gravity, and experience; and he joined in the commission Blegored, the archdeacon of Llandaff; a person highly distinguished for learning, and a knowledge of the laws. This committee entered into a strict examination of the customs and ancient institutions of Wales. With a judicious and discriminating eye they abolished every law become injurious or unnecessary; those, likewise, which time had rendered confused and unintelligible, were explained with greater perspicuity; and by a proper digest of the whole, a system was framed; which, allowing for limited ideas in jurisprudence, was wisely adapted to the genius, necessities, and situation of the Welsh.*

This system was formed on the basis of the ancient national laws.†

* Welsh Chron. p. 53.

† Said to have been originally framed by Moelmutius, who reigned in Britain 441 years before Christ. Holinshead, p. 177.

After the new code of laws had been read, proclaimed, and ratified by the public approbation; three copies of them were put into writing; one of which was designed for the use of the prince, and to follow his court; and the others were deposited in the palaces of Aberffraw and Dinevawr. This may be considered as a tolerable advance in juridical policy, for that age; when private rights and public laws had been, in a great measure, transmitted by local customs and immemorial tradition. To add still greater authority to the laws, and to stamp them as objects of religious veneration; the archbishop of St. David denounced excommunication on all who should violate them. Influenced, likewise, by the spirit of the age, or desirous of rendering such a ceremony subservient to his views, Howel, attended by the archbishop of St. David, the bishops of Bangor and St. Asaph, and thirteen other persons of distinction, proceeded to Rome; where the new system of legislation was solemnly ratified by the Pope;

and having thus given the last sanction to his laws, he returned into Wales.*

The mild temper of this prince seems, in some measure, to have influenced the transactions of his reign; few military incidents having disturbed it during a period of forty years. At this time, however, the English, with a considerable force, invaded North Wales; and after they had laid waste the small territory of Strath-Clwyd, returned into their own country.† A. D. 944.

A few years after this event king Howel died; leaving four sons, Owen, Rhun, Roderic, and Edwyn; who, dividing among themselves the principalities of South Wales and Powys, relinquished North Wales to the right heirs, Jeuav and Jago, the sons of Edwal Voel.‡ A. D. 948.

* Welsh Chron. p. 54.

† Ibid. p. 58.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 58.

The death of this amiable prince, who had long enjoyed the mild honours resulting peace, and the public esteem, spread universally the deepest sorrow. As a grateful memorial of his virtues, posterity have given him the surname of *Dda*, or the Good. His code of laws is the best eulogium to his memory; and raises him as much above the rest of the Cambrian princes,* as peace and gentleness of manners, and a regulated state; are preferable to the evils inseparable from war, to the fierceness of uncivilized life, and to the habits of a wild independency.

THE LAWS OF HOWEL DDA were divided into three parts, each of

* From this comparison it is the author's meaning to except those British and Cambrian princes who defended their country from the rapacity or ambition of foreign enemies: a conduct than which nothing can be more meritorious, or scarcely any thing have a higher claim on the respect and gratitude of mankind.

which had a distinct and separate object; the king's prerogatives, with the œconomy of his court; the affairs of civil jurisprudence; and the criminal law.

The king possessed, by virtue of his prerogative, the patronage of monasteries, the protection of public roads, the right of creating laws with consent of his people, of coining money within his dominions, and of presiding in the principal causes that related to himself, his crown, and its appendages. He was empowered to lead an army only once a year, and for no longer time than six weeks, out of his kingdom; within his own territories he might at any time muster his subjects and conduct them to battle. He was priviledged to hunt in any part of his dominions. He had a power of compelling any of his subjects to build the royal castles.

If any person addressed the king with unbecoming and insolent language, he was

constrained to pay a fine of six head of cattle, Offences against the king were, to commit adultery with his queen, to kill his substitute, and violate his protection. The judges were considered as the king's substitutes. The fine for these treasons consisted of a rod of gold of the king's stature, a bull, and a hundred cows, from every *cantrev* or district belonging to the attainted person. For assasinating the king the penalty was made threefold.

The witness or debtor who followed the sound of the military horn, when the king marched to war, was excused from obedience to a legal summons. At his accession he confirmed the rights of places of asylum; and it was also his prerogative to fix the bounds of *cantrevs* and *trevs*. He had likewise a power of bringing to immediate trial causes in which the crown was concerned, and of setting aside a written law to make room for a traditional custom. There were species of offences which

gave the king the privilege of selling the offenders. The king was not amenable to his own judges.

To moderate these excesses of authority, some limitations were thrown into the opposite scale. If complaint was made that the king, or any of his substitutes, had violated the laws, and exercised oppression; the matter was then to be decided by a verdict of the country; that is, by a jury of fifty men holding land, sworn to do justice; if the accusation was found to be just, they ordered reparation to be made. The king had no power to punish his subjects for offences committed out of his kingdom, or in the time of his predecessor. Though he had granted to an abbey rights or privileges by which his prerogative was infringed, yet the law ordained that the grant should never be revoked; alledging that it was more safe to diminish than to increase the royal power.

The Welsh, engaged in a roving and military life, had little leisure to exercise the arts, or to cultivate the ground; and of consequence were, in some degree, in a state of poverty. They had many usages, however, which tended to make their princes opulent, and to supply them with the means of displaying that unrestrained hospitality by which their residence was rendered conspicuous.

The king was the original landlord of the whole of his dominions. The services by which land were held under him were of three kinds; military service, service in the courts of law, and the payment of the public tribute, which in ancient times was made with horned cattle. When land, by neglecting the service for the performance of which they were granted, or by deserting them without the king's licence, were forfeited, they reverted to him. His subjects were obliged to build the royal palaces; and, in a great measure, they

maintained his household: he was entitled to all treasures, wherever found; to all goods not claimed by any owner; and the possessions of deceased bishops. Among the various productive sources of revenue was the sale of honourable and lucrative places, and the escheat of goods exceeding one pound in value, such as horses, oxen, cows, gold, silver, and embroidered garments: escheated goods of inferior price belonged to the royal officers and domestics. According to the ancient division of Wales, settled by its laws, a *cantrev* contained two *commots; a commot* twelve manors; a manor four townships. A yearly tribute of one pound was due from every free manor, and was paid to the king in money; or, in lieu thereof, a horse-load of the best flour, a slaughtered ox, a cask of mead,* one hundred and sixty sheaves of oats for the provender of the king's horses, a sow, a flitch of bacon, and a vessel of butter. This tribute was paid in the summer. In winter,

* *Medd.*

the royal household was in a great measure supported by the free manors; each of which paid likewise two shillings in money, to be divided among the domestics. Those manors which were not emancipated, but remained in a state of vassalage, paid twice in the year a smaller tribute, consisting of ale, butter, cheese, bread, corn for provender, hogs, and sheep. In every *commot* of Wales, two townships remained in the king's private possession, ungranted to any subject. A mayor and a chancellor superintended the royal demesnes: the latter officer had the privilege of being preceded by a verger; he had also the power of imprisonment, and was not liable to be taxed. Shipwrecks and all other things thrown up by the sea upon the shore of the king's personal estates became his property: when thrown on the territory of a bishop, abbot, or any other lord, the king had also a right to an equal share.

Besides these sources of advantage

arising to the king, there were many others which were considered as the fruits of his prerogative. He had the escheat of the goods of suicides. Foreigners, who were vagabonds, and who were found in any part of his dominions, were the property of the king. He was the proprietor, likewise, of wastes, forests, and the sea. He had the power of commanding a workman from every town in villanage to erect his tent. The villains of the crown were obliged to build for the king nine apartments of his palace; the hall, the royal bed-chamber, the pantry, the stable, the dog-kennel, the barn, the kiln, the privy, and the dormitory. Young women were accounted among the sources of the king's revenue; and to him a fee was paid on their marriage or violation. A fine was paid to the king on any breach of contract. A toll was also to be paid by every merchant ship which came into the ports of Wales: and if any ship, which had not paid toll, happened to be wrecked, its cargo was forfeited to the king.

Vassals, in a state of villanage, were obliged, nine times in the year, to furnish the king's horses and dogs with provender, and his foreigners with provision. They were likewise constrained to yield up all their honey and fish to the use of the court; and to provide horses to carry the baggage and ammunition of the army. A third part of all military plunder was yielded to the crown.

The queen had a right of patronage, or protection; and received a third part of the revenues of the royal manors. The violation of her person was deemed among the treasonable offences, with the addition of a moiety to the ordinary penalty. A present of money was due to her when her daughter was married. She had also a power to dispose of a third part of what she had received from the king.

The heir apparent was either the son, the brother, the nephew, or cousin of the king: and it was believed that the king's

private promise or appointment could secure the succession to either of these kinsmen, without regard to nearness of blood. The laws placed him near the king's person, and under his authority: he sat at the king's table, and was served by the royal attendants. The king, the heir apparent, and the master of the palace paid no portion with their daughters: the honour and influence derived from such an alliance was deemed an equivalent. Deformity of person, as well as incapacity of mind, disqualified the king's son, or next of kindred, from the government; as they did any subject from public offices, and the inheritance of land.

The officers of the household, and twelve gentlemen whose tenures of land were by military service, composed the royal guard, and were mounted upon horses furnished by the king.

The royal household consisted of the following officers and domestics.

The master of the palace. He was sometimes the heir apparent,—always of the royal blood. His authority extended to every person of the household: and when any of them fell under the king's displeasure, this officer entertained him until a reconciliation was effected. He received a share of all military plunder; and, on three festivals in the year, was obliged by his office to deliver the harp into the hands of the domestic bard. He was also, it is probable, the king's treasurer.

The domestic chaplain was by his office appointed to say grace, to celebrate mass, and to be consulted in matters of conscience. He was also secretary to the king, and to the principal court of justice. In the king's absence, the domestic chaplain, the judge of the palace, and the steward of the household, supported the royal dignity, and exercised the authority annexed to it.

The steward of the household superin-

tended the inferior domestics; receiving, among other emoluments, the skins of lambs, kids, and fawns, and all other creatures, from an ox to an eel, killed for the use of the king's kitchen. He was the king's taster; and drank, but did not eat, at the king's table. He distributed among the officers of the household their wages: he assigned them proper seats in the hall of the palace, and allotted the apartments in which they were to sleep.

The Master of the Hawks, was required to sleep near his birds: he had his bed in the king's granary, where they were kept; and not in the palace, lest they should be injured by the smoke. He was restricted to a certain measure of mead and ale; that he might not neglect his duty. In spring he had the skin of a hind, and in autumn that of a stag, for gloves to guard his hands, and thongs for the gesses of his hawks. The eagle, the crane, the hawk, the falcon, and the raven, were considered

as royal birds; when any of these were killed without authority, a fine was paid to the king. The king owed three services to the master of the hawks; on the day when he took a curlieu, a hern, or a bittern. He held the horse of this officer while he took the bird; he held his stirrup while he mounted and dismounted: and that night honoured him likewise with three different presents. If the king was not in the field, he rose from his seat to receive this officer upon his return; or if he did not rise, he gave him the garment which he wore at the time.

The Judge of the Palace. The court in which this judge presided, was the principal court of Wales. It is said that he always lodged in the hall of the palace; and that the cushion on which the king was seated in the day, served for his pillow at night. On his appointment, he received an ivory chess-board from the king; a gold ring from the queen, and another gold

ring from the domestic bard; which he always kept as the insignia of his office. When he entered, or departed out of the palace, the great gate was opened for him; that his dignity might not be degraded by passing under a wicket. He determined the rank and duty of the several officers of the household. He decided poetical contests: and received from the victorious bard, whom he rewarded with a silver chair, the badge of poetical pre-eminence; a gold ring, a drinking horn, and a cushion. If complaint was made to the king, that the judge of the palace had pronounced an unjust sentence, and the accusation was proved; he was then for ever deprived of his office, and condemned to lose his tongue, or pay the usual ransom for that member. The other judges were also subject to these severe but salutary conditions. A person ignorant of the laws, whom the king designed to make his principal judge, was required to reside previously a whole year in the palace; that he might obtain from the other judges

who resorted thither from the country, a competent knowledge of his profession and duty. During this year, the difficult causes which occurred, were stated and referred by him to the king: at the expiration of this term, he was to receive the sacrament from the hands of the domestic chaplain, and to swear at the altar that he would never knowingly pronounce an unjust sentence, nor ever be influenced by bribes or intreaties, hatred or affection: he was then placed by the king in his seat, and invested with the judicial authority; and afterwards received presents from the officers of the household. It was reckoned among the remarkable and peculiar customs of the Welsh, that the tongues of all animals slaughtered for the use of the king's houshold, were given to the judge of the palace.

The Master of the Horse. His lodging was near the royal stables and granary; and it was his duty to make an equal distribution of provender among the royal

horses. From every person on whom the king had bestowed one of his horses, this officer received a present. To him and to his equerries belonged all colts, not two years old, included in the king's share of spoils taken in war. To him also belonged the riding caps, saddles, bridles, and spurs, which the king had used and laid aside. The spurs, we are told, were of gold, silver, and brass. It was part of his duty, to produce the horse belonging to the judge of the palace in good condition and in his complete furniture. The judge, in return for this care, instructed him in the nature of his rank and privileges. The extent of his protection was, the distance to which the swiftest horse in the king's stables could run.

The chamberlain, was obliged to eat and sleep in the king's private apartment, which he was appointed to guard. It was his duty to fill, and present to the king, his drinking horn; and to keep also

his plate and rings, for all of which he was accountable. When the king's bed furniture and wearing apparel were laid aside, they were given to the chamberlain. If a person, walking in the king's chamber at night, without a light in his hand, happened to be slain, the laws gave no compensation for his death.

The Domestic Bard, was considered as next in rank to the chief Bard of Wales. He was obliged, at the queen's command, to sing in her own chamber, three different pieces of poetry set to music; but in a low voice, that the court might not be disturbed in the hall. At his appointment he received a harp from the king, and a gold ring from the queen. On three great festivals, in the year, he received and wore the garments of the steward of the household; and at those entertainments sat next to the master of the palace. He accompanied the army when they marched into the enemy's country; and when

they prepared for battle, he sung before them an ancient poem called *Unbenniaeth Prydain*, or the Monarchy of Britain; and for this service was rewarded with the most valuable beast of the plunder which they had taken in these incursions.

An Officer to command Silence. This he performed first by his voice, and afterwards by striking with his rod of office a pillar near which the domestic chaplain usually sat: and to him a fine was due for every disturbance in the court. He took charge of the implements of husbandry, and of the flocks and herds belonging to the king's demesnes, in the absence of the bailiff, or during the vacancy of his place. He was also a collector of the royal revenues.

The Master of the Hounds. In the hunting season he was entertained, together with his servants and dogs, by by those tenants who held lands in vil-

lanage. Hinds were hunted from the middle of February to midsummer; and stags from that time to the middle of October. From the ninth day of November to the end of that month, this officer hunted the wild boar. On the first day of November, he brought his hounds and all his hunting apparatus for the king's inspection: and then the skins of the animals he had killed in the preceding season were divided, according to a settled proportion, between the king, himself, and his attendants. A little before Christmas he returned to the court, to support his rank and enjoy his privileges. During his residence at the palace he was lodged in the kiln-house, where corn was prepared by fire for the dogs. His bugle was the horn of an ox, valued at one pound. Whenever his oath was required, he swore by his horn, his hounds, and leashes. Early in the morning, before he put on his boots, and then only, he was liable to be cited to appear before a court of judicature. The master of

the hounds, or any other person who shared with the king, had a right to divide, and the king to choose. It was his duty to accompany the army on its march with his horn; and to sound the alarm, and the signal of battle. His protection extended to any distance which the sound of his horn could reach. The laws declared, that the beaver, the martin, and the stoat were the king's property wherever killed; and that with the furry skins of these animals his robes were to be bordered. The legal price of a beaver's skin was stated at ten shillings.*

The Mead-brewer. This liquor, which was the wine commonly used by the Welsh, was made with honey mixed in a vat with boiling water, and spiced. The wax separated by this process from the honey, was partly given to the mead-brewer, and partly applied to the uses of the hall, which was the refectory of the

* Lord Lyttleton, surely, was not apprised of the testimony of Howel's laws, when he ridiculed Giraldus's account of beavers in Wales as fabulous.

palace; and to those of the queen's dining apartment.

The Physician of the Household, was also a practitioner of surgery. In slight cases, he cured the king's domestics without a fee. When he healed a common wound, he claimed the torn and bloody garments of the wounded person. When the brain was laid open, the bowels in sight; or a thigh, leg, or arm was fractured; he received one pound for the cure. He was entitled to a bond from the family of his patient; by which he was indemnified, if death should ensue: if he did not take this precaution, and the patient happened to die, he was liable to a legal prosecution. He always attended the army on its march.

The Cup-bearer had charge of the mead-cellar, and filled and presented the drinking-horns.

The Door-keeper, whose duty it was to carry messages to the king and his court.

His station and lodging was the gate-house. He was required to know personally all the officers of the household, that he might not refuse admittance to any of them; which refusal was considered and punished as a violation of privilege. If he deserted his post, and happened to receive any insult, he could obtain no compensation. He cleared the way before the king; and with his rod kept off the crowd. He preserved the hall of the palace free from intruders; and did not sit, but kneel in the king's presence. The door-keeper of the palace, and the door-keeper of the royal chamber, lodged with the gate-keeper in the gate-house.

The Cook, to whose office appertained the skins of all animals slaughtered for the use of the kitchen. He always carried the last dish, out of the kitchen, and placed it before the king; who immediately rewarded him with meat and drink.

The Sconce-bearer, who held wax tapers when the king sat in the hall, and carried them before him when he retired to his chamber.

The Steward to the Queen; this officer was also her taster. He superintended her domestics, and was entertained at her table.

The Queen's Chaplain, who was also her secretary; and received a fee for every grant or instrument which bore her seal. He was also entertained in her dining apartment, and sat opposite to her at table. He was entitled by his office to the penitential robes which the queen wore during lent. He lodged together with the king's chaplain, in the sacristan's house.

The Master of the Horse to the Queen, was in several respects upon the same footing with the king's officer of the same name.

The queen's chamberlain transacted every business between her apartment and the hall of the palace, and kept her wardrobe. His lodging was near the royal chamber, that he might be in readiness whenever he was wanted.

The woman of the queen's chamber, whose office it was to sleep so near her mistress, as to be able to hear her speak, though in a whisper. She was entitled to the queen's linen, hair-laces, shoes, bridles, and saddles, when they were laid aside.

The door-keeper to the queen lodged in the gate-house.

The queen's cook.

The queen's sconce-bearer.

The groom of the rein, who, when the master of the horse was absent, supplied his place. He led the king's horse to

and from the stables, brought out his arms, held his stirrup when he mounted or dismounted, and ran by his side as his page.

An officer to support the king's feet at banquets. He was the footstool of his throne, and the guard of his person. There was one in every *cantrev*.

The bailiff of the king's demesne. It was his province to judge and to punish the king's private vassals; and to him their heriots and amercements were paid. The servants of the chancellor and the officers of the revenue drove into his custody the tribute-cattle; and by him the king's household was supplied with provision.

The apparitor, as an officer of the household, stood between the two pillars in the hall, and had the charge of the palace during entertainments, that it might not suffer any damage by fire or

otherwise. He appeared likewise in another capacity; conveying the summonses and citations of the principal court of justice. He carried a wand as the badge of his office; and claimed entertainment at every house to which he was sent. When the judges were sitting, it was the apparitor's duty to silence, or take into custody those offenders who disturbed the court.

The gate-keeper claimed by custom a share of several things carried through the gate-house to the palace. State prisoners were committed to his custody. He acted as apparitor in the king's demesnes. He provided straw for the beds and other uses of the royal household; and he took care that the fires were lighted.

The watchman of the palace was an officer who guarded the king's person while he slept. To him were given, as symbols of his duty, the eyes of all ani-

inals slaughtered for the use of the palace kitchen. When the king and the officers of the household retired to sleep, a horn was sounded, which was a signal to the watchman to go upon duty. In the morning, when the palace gate was opened, he was relieved. From that time, until the horn was sounded again at night, he was permitted to sleep, and was under no necessity of performing any other service, unless he voluntarily undertook it for a reward. If he was found negligent or asleep during his watch, he was subject to heavy punishments.

The woodman procured fuel for the uses of the household. He also slaughtered the cattle for the royal kitchen with his axe.

The baker-woman.

The palace smith was obliged to work for the household without any reward, except when he made a boiling-pot, the

point of a spear, the woodman's axe; the iron work of the gate of the palace or royal castle, and the iron work of the mill. It was his duty to strike off the shackles of prisoners released by the court of justice; and he received a fee for that service. No other smith was allowed to exercise his trade in the same *commot* with the palace smith without his permission.

The laundress.

The chief musician was chosen into and seated in the chair of music, for his superior skill in that science, by the session of the bards, at the end of every third year. When his term expired, if he had maintained his superiority, he was re-chosen. He was the only person, except the domestic bard, who was allowed to perform in the king's presence. He was lodged in one of the apartments belonging to the heir apparent. In the hall he sat next to the judge of the palace. When the king desired to hear music, the

chief musician sung two poems, accompanied by the harp; one, in praise of the Almighty; the other, in honour of princes, and their exploits: after which, a third poem was sung by the domestic bard. His emoluments arose out of fees given by brides on their nuptials; and from those of novices in music, when they were admitted to the practice of their profession. The Welsh bards were usually accompanied in their songs by the harp, the crwth, and the flute. They frequently addressed poems to their princes and lords; in which they solicited presents; such as a horse, a bull, a sword, or a garment; and they were seldom, if ever, refused.

The comptroller of the revenues had the privilege of bringing three guests to banquets in the palace. This officer, and the chancellor, received all the honey, the fish, and wild creatures, which were paid as tributes, or forfeited to the king. They also received a third part of the income

arising to the king from his tenants in villanage.

These were the different officers of whom the royal household was composed. They were freeholders by their offices; and, in consequence of this, they all enjoyed the right of protection, by which they granted criminals a temporary safety. On the heads of these persons, and on all their members, a price was fixed by the laws. They received for their wearing apparel woollen cloth from the king, and linen from the queen. They were all assembled by the sound of a horn.

CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE.

There were three species of courts; each of which enjoyed a distinct prerogative, with power to take cognizance of offences, and to punish them:—the royal, the episcopal, and the abbatial. When a person, subject to one of these jurisdictions, litigated with a person subject to

another, the cause was tried by the judges of the respective courts conjunctively.

The royal courts,—those in which the judges sat as the king's substitutes, were distinguished into four kinds:—the principal court, the courts of *cantrevs*, courts of *commots*, and extraordinary courts. The principal court was usually held at the king's chief residence.

For the administration of justice in the *commots* and *cantrevs* remote from the principal court, inferior judges were appointed, with the title of chancellors, who also assisted the officers of revenue, called Meiri, in collecting the taxes. Extraordinary courts were appointed by the king to hear and determine extraordinary causes, and to remedy the abuses which had arisen from a perversion of the established laws.

When the ordinary judges differed in points of law, the regular and secular

canons were appointed in that case extraordinary judges.

The principal courts of North Wales and Powys consisted of the following officers appointed by the king: a judge, a chancellor, a provost, a clerk to register the decrees of the court, and an apparitor to execute them. The courts of South Wales had the four last-mentioned officers, with several judges, who held their offices by virtue of the land they possessed, and received no fees.

All the courts were shut in Spring, that ploughing and sowing might not be impeded; and in Autumn, on account of the harvest. The judges were guided in their decisions, not only by the code of national laws, but likewise by the *Brawd-lyfr*,*

* The Book of Triads, and the Book of Reports, were private volumes, written by Welsh lawyers. There was likewise a code of Welsh laws, called the laws of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, a prince posterior to Howel. If an action was brought forward according to the laws of Bleddyn, the judge could

or Book of Reports, which contained precedents of the proceedings and decrees of their predecessors; and by the writings of Welsh lawyers also, which were held in great estimation. A legal cause was that in which four persons or parties were concerned: the king to preside, the judge to examine and determine, the prosecutor, and the party accused. The accusing party was bound over to prosecute; the party accused was obliged to find sureties, who were imprisoned during the pendency of the suit. In any suit, civil or criminal, a clerical plaintiff must proceed against a lay defendant in the king's court; and of consequence, a lay plaintiff must prosecute his suit against his clerical adversary in the ecclesiastical court.

Disputes concerning hereditary right were frequently decided by single combat. Three sorts of persons, by the laws of Wales, might be killed with impunity:

not frame his judgment by the laws of Howel, and *vice versa*.

a madman, a foreigner, and a leper. No person was allowed to bequeath his property by testament, unless to the church, and for the payment of debts.

A wife was not allowed by law to be a surety for her husband, or an evidence for or against him. A married woman had no disposal of any part of her husband's property, either by sale or purchase. A daughter was only entitled to a moiety of a son's share of the father's personal property. Land and buildings were the only property which descended by hereditary succession. Personal effects, under the regulation of the laws, were divided among the wife and children.

OF CAUSES BETWEEN SURETIES AND DEBTORS.

A Debtor was obliged to indemnify his surety, by payment of the debt, or giving a pledge, or disavowing the bail. In a cause of debtor and surety, the

surety was required to swear that he had given bail, and was discharged from his suit and bail: if he refused to swear, he lost the cause, and was obliged to pay the debt. A surety was indemnified only by payment of the whole and not a part of the debt. The surety was not bound to discharge the debt, until the debtor had refused or failed; but the law provided against such refusal or failure, by empowering the surety to take a pledge from the debtor more than equivalent to the debt. If a debtor found a surety, and afterwards fled to an asylum to evade payment, the law in that case deprived him of his right of asylum. Utensils of the church could not be pledged. The bail of a responsible person could not be refused. Notorious drunkards, lunatics, hermits, foreigners, and persons in holy orders, were incompetent to give bail, or to enter into any covenant, action, or personal obligation; as were likewise monks, without the consent of their abbots; vassals, without the consent of their lords; scholars, without the consent of

their preceptors; sons under the age of fourteen, without the consent of their fathers; and wives, without the consent of their husbands; except ladies of manors, giving bail for their vassals.

OF COMPACTS.

A legal compact was made by the meeting of the parties before a witness; declaring to him the nature of their compact; and joining their hands to his, under a promise of abiding by it. So very sacred was a compact considered, that it could not be annulled, even by an express law.

OF THE SEVERAL CASES IN WHICH A SINGLE WITNESS WAS ADMISSIBLE.

A Lord, in a cause between two of his vassals, in which he himself was not concerned. An abbot, between two of

his monks. A father, between two of his sons. A judge, concerning his own adjudication. A surety, in a cause concerning a matter for which he had given bail. A donor, in a cause concerning his own donation; or (according to other manuscripts) a priest, between two of his parishioners. A young woman, concerning her own virginity. The public herdsman of a township, concerning the herd or flock under his care. A thief at the gallows, concerning his accomplices.

It was usual for a husband to give presents to his wife on the first morning after her marriage, and before she arose out of bed; which presents were considered as her own property: but if the wife neglected to seize this favourable opportunity, she could never afterwards demand them.* This present was called *Egweddi* or *Cowyll.*

* Howel Dda, chap. I. lib. II. p. 80, 88.

In cases of divorces among the Welsh, an equal division of property took place, under certain limitations. If a wife was separated from her husband before the expiration of seven years, she was entitled to enjoy her *egweddi.* If separated after seven years, she divided with her husband all his property. If a wife separated from her husband for just causes, she retained her *egweddi*,* *paraphernalia*, and a fine called *gofyn.* A widow, on the death of her husband, divided with his heirs, the personal property. When a husband, who had repudiated his first, took a second wife, the former was at liberty to marry again. A woman was allowed to leave her husband for the three following causes: — leprosy, bad breath, and impotency: but, in these cases, the husband was under no obligation of dividing his property with the woman.

* Howel Dda, chap. I. lib. II. p. 73.

CRIMINAL LAW.

An injury done to a single woman was to be compensated by half of that fine paid on the like occasion for any injury done to her brother. The murder of either a married or single woman was to be atoned for by half of the fine paid for the murder of her brother. For adultery, or even for indecent familiarities with a married woman, a fine was to be paid to the husband by the male offender. The forcible violation, or carrying away a married woman, was compensated by a triple augmentation of the mulct. A married woman, allowing indecent familiarities, or committing adultery with another man, might be divorced by her husband; and, in that case, lost her dower. The person who forcibly violated the chastity of a woman was to pay a fine of twelve cows to the king, and the customary fine to the lord: and if the woman was a virgin, he was then to pay to her, her *paraphernalia*, and the greatest dower that could be ex-

acted by law; together with the mulct usually paid for violated chastity.* If either a man or a woman were accused of adultery, and denied the charge, the party accused might prove his innocence by the oaths of fifty persons of the same sex, who were neither slaves, captives, nor aliens.

Perjury was punished by the payment of a mulct of three cows to the king.

Whoever bailed a criminal, and did not produce him at the time of his legal appearance, was obnoxious to all the penalties to which the criminal himself was liable.

* The several particulars, for which the author is indebted to the laws of Howel, are here inserted from the text, and Latin translation, of that curious code published by Dr. Wotton, folio, London; Ann. Dom. 1730. The author subjoins no references to the chapters or pages of that work, which is the only edition of the Welsh laws, because the copious and accurate index annexed to it will be a ready direction to the reader, who is desirous of enquiring more particularly into the subject.

The sole object of the law, concerning the maiming of animals, was complete restitution to the owner; no other penalty being annexed to that offence.

Forfeiture of land was incurred in the three following cases: a vassal giving notice to the enemy of the design of his lord respecting any intended expedition: treason against the person of his lord: and murder secretly perpetrated: but if the offender, by flight, should escape justice, and should afterwards be reconciled to his lord, he must in that case pay a double fine; but could not recover the inheritance of his land, unless he went to Rome, and there did penance; and procured also the pope's letters that he had made his peace with God, and with his temporal lord.

There were three causes for which a man might give his wife personal correction: wishing shame and evil to his beard: committing any outrage against his person: and for engaging in an illicit con-

nexion with another man. If the husband took the above-mentioned satisfaction of correcting his wife, he forfeited those privileges which the law otherwise would have allowed him.

On the death of Howel Dda, the late sovereign of the united principalities of Wales; Ieuav and Iago, the second and third sons of Edwal Voel, setting aside from the succession their eldest brother Meyric, assumed the government of North Wales.* To revenge upon the sons of Howel Dda the injuries which these princes had received from the father, they invaded South Wales with a powerful army; laying claim to its sovereignty as the eldest branch of the Cynethian line; and though they met with a spirited opposition on the Carno mountains,‡ they gained a complete victory.† The year

A. D. 948.

* Welsh Chron. p. 59, 60. † Ibid.

‡ Between Abergavenny and Merthyr Tydvil.

following, having renewed hostilities, the same princes again invaded South Wales, and desolated by two successive inroads
A. D. 952. the country of Pembroke. The sons of Howel Dda, collecting their utmost force, laid waste, in their turn the territory of North Wales as far as the river Conway. To check this invasion, the two princes Ieuav and Iago, opposed them at Llanrwst, a town situated on the banks of the Conway; where, after an obstinate battle, in which many on each side of considerable rank were slain, fortune decided as before in their favour; and pursuing their enemies into South Wales, they destroyed the country of Cardigan with fire and sword.* The sons of Howel Dda, with a kind of retaliative justice, were at length obliged to submit to the power of Ieuav and Iago; and in consequence of this superiority, these princes remained some years the entire sovereigns
A. D. 958. of Wales.† Ambition and the love of power universally prevail, and, in the

* Welsh Chron. p. 60, 61. † Ibid.

conquest of barren mountains, inspire the like ardour, with which Alexander contended for the sovereignty of the world.

During this usurpation, and probably elated with the success of their arms, the kings of North Wales had neglected to pay the tribute which was due to the crown of England; agreeably to the impolitic institution of Roderic the Great, and the more recent, but no less imprudent regulation in the laws of Howel Dda. To preserve such an ornament to his crown, and a badge of subordination so flattering to his pride, Edgar, the king of England, invaded North Wales; and as he marched through the country spread around the usual devastations. Being A. D. 961. acquainted with the injuries both countries had received from the wolves, which then abounded in North Wales, and destroyed sheep and other cattle, he remitted, with some degree of liberality, the ancient tribute; and only exacted the yearly payment of the heads of three

hundred of those animals.* This demand, so singular in its nature, was paid by the Welsh princes during three or four years. After that time, the wolves being nearly extirpated, this country, agreeably to the liberal design of Edgar, ought to have been released from the payment of any future tribute.† Soon after this event, the Irish made a descent upon the island of Anglesey; destroyed the palace at Aberffraw; and slew Roderic, the youngest son of Edwal Voel.‡

A. D. 966. The union, so long subsisting between the princes of North Wales, in a joint administration of twenty years, was at this period fatally dissolved,—an event soon followed by a series of crimes, the

* Stowe's Chron. p. 83, printed at London, A.D. 1614. Fabian's Chron. p. 249.

† W. Malmsbury, p. 59. Fabian, p. 249. Stowe's Chron. p. 83. Welsh Chron. p. 62, excepting only the number.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 62.

consequences of a divided sovereignty, and of bosom friendship soured into deadly hatred.*

In consequence of this disunion, by force of arms, Iago seized the person of his brother Ieuav, and consigned him to a tedious imprisonment: and Einion, the son of Owen, prince of South Wales, taking advantage of these domestic feuds, annexed to his father's dominions the territory of Gwyr,§ in Glamorganshire.† To add still more to the distresses of the country, the Danes landed in Anglesey, A. D. 969. and laid waste the district about Penmon; and soon after, in another enterprize, they gained for a time the possession of that island.‡

These commotions having subsided, Howel, the son of Ieuav the captive prince, raised an army to deliver his father out of prison, and to take vengeance

* Welsh Chron. p. 62. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.
§ Gower.

on his uncle Iago for the late outrage against natural affection and justice. Under the mask of filial piety, which, however, covered the most fatal ambition,
A. D. 917. Howel succeeded in his enterprize; having defeated the forces of Iago, and obliged him to abandon his territories. He likewise took prisoner, in the action, Meyric, his eldest uncle; and, to render him incapable of obstructing his designs, he put out his eyes; a species of barbarity common in that age: and, in this miserable condition, suffered him to languish in prison. Within a little time after his captivity, this prince fortunately died; and left two sons, Edwal and Ionaval. Howel, having proceeded so far in the progress of ambition, and too much enamoured of power to relinquish it easily, deposed his father; though he released him from the horrors of a tedious imprisonment.*

Under colour of revenging the injuries

* Welsh Chron. p. 62, 63.

of his father, Howel, by acts of the deepest injustice and cruelty, attained to the sovereignty of North Wales.* A. D. 973.

It was an evil, peculiarly fatal to the independency of Wales, and produced by its civil dissensions; that the weaker party usually fled for protection to the kings of England; and engaged in their interests with that energy of spirit, which arises from a sense of injury, or is natural to men who have much to hope from the confusion of a state, or to fear from its justice.

After the defeat of Iago, that prince had retired into England; and easily engaged Edgar to reinstate him upon the throne. The English king, desirous of fomenting the divisions of the Welsh, or of giving them a sovereign subservient to his will; entered into Wales with an army, and advanced to Bangor. Howel, unable to resist his force, was obliged to

* Welsh Chron. p. 64.

accede to the demand of the English prince; of allowing an equal share in the sovereignty to his uncle Iago. Assuming a sovereign authority, in consequence of the ascendency he had gained, Edgar founded a new church at Bangor, on the south side of the cathedral, and dedicated it to the Virgin Mary; he likewise confirmed the ancient privileges of that See, and endowed it with lands and other gifts.* To humiliate still more the Welsh princes, he obliged Iago and his nephew Howel to accompany him to Chester. In this city, agreeably to his direction, he was met by six other sovereigns; † who all of them, with great solemnity did him homage, and took the customary oaths of fealty as to their lord paramount. This ceremony being finished, Edgar, attended by great numbers of the nobility, seated himself at the helm of his barge; and as a farther

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 59.

† Kenneth king of Scotland, Malcome king of Cumbria, Macon king of Man, with Dyfnwal, Sifrethus, and Ithel, three inferior Welsh princes.

mark of subordination, commanded these eight independent princes to row him up the Dee, from the palace where he resided to the church of St. John the Baptist; whence he returned in the same state, after divine service was ended.* This instance of feudal arrogance, so disgraceful to regal dignity, marked a fastidious spirit in the English king, and a degree of barbarism still remaining in the Saxon manners.

At this period, Dunwallon, the prince of the Strath-Clwyd † Britons, who had settled in North Wales: intimidated by the cruel ravages of the Danes, or influenced by the pious spirit of that age, retired to Rome, and engaged in a religious life.‡ On his retreat, that small state was reunited to the kingdom of North Wales §

* Selden's Mare Clausum, p. 1315. Brompton's Chron. p. 869. Math. Westm. p. 287.

† Vale of Clwyd.

‡ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 69. Welsh Chron. p. 65.

§ Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 32.

A. D. 976. Einion, the son of Owen prince of South Wales, made a second inroad into the country of Gower, and laid waste that territory. This affront would have been severely resented by Howel, the king of North Wales, if his arms at this time had not been directed against his uncle Iago, who was in open hostilities against him. With an army consisting of English and Welsh, Howel pursued that prince to the extremity of Wales, and at length took him prisoner; exhibiting an instance of generosity very inconsistent with himself, by allowing his uncle Iago to enjoy, during life, his portion of territory.* But so capricious was this tyrant in his ideas of policy, or in his feelings of humanity, that soon after this event, he caused his uncle Edwal Vychan to be murdered; without any apparent cause, except what arose from the suggestions of jealousy, or from a consciousness of guilt. This murder, instead of giving tranquility to Howel,

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 60.

produced fresh causes of fear, and a new object of terror sprung from the Hydra's head.

Fired with the deepest resentment, and with the hopes of dispossessing him of the crown, Constantine the Black,* the son of Iago, who at this time was a prisoner to his nephew Howel, raised an army of Danes; and to revenge the injuries which his family had received, invaded North Wales, and laid waste the island of Anglesey. But Howel, who A. D. 979.
was not deficient in bravery though destitude of other virtues, collected his forces; and gave the Danes a signal defeat in a battle fought at Gwaith Hirbarth, in which young Constantine his cousin was slain. †

The Danes, mortified with the disgrace their arms had received, renewed hostilities: and invading South Wales, desolated the territory of Pembroke, and demolished the church of St. David;

* *Cystenyn Ddu.* † Welsh Chron. p. 65.

A. D. 981. but having fought the celebrated battle of Llanwenoc,* in which the Welsh army was probably commanded by prince Einion, they were forced to retire out of the country.† The year following, Alfred earl of Mercia, with a large body of English, invaded South Wales. After he had destroyed the town of Brecknock, he was encountered by the united forces of the Welsh, under the command of Howel, king of North Wales, and Einion, the eldest son of Owen, prince of South Wales: in this battle the Mercian prince was defeated, and the greater part of his army cut in pieces.‡ This occasional junction of the Welsh princes, and the prosperous exertion of their force; might have taught them the salutary effects of union, and the expediency of consolidating the national strength.

A. D. 983. A commotion having arisen among the

* In Cardiganshire.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 61.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 66.

inhabitants of Gwent,* who were aiming at independency, Owen, the prince of South Wales, sent his son Einion, to endeavour, by persuasion, to reduce them to obedience; but that gallant youth found a raging multitude as little capable of reason or pity as the stormy ocean; and regarding him as the heir to the crown, and consequently as the object of their fear and indignation, they tore him in pieces.—Thus perished by an ignoble fate, a young prince, whose military talents, and other virtues, had for some time very ably supported the cause of his country. He left two sons, Edwyn and Tewdwr Mawr; from whose loins descended several of the princes of South Wales.†

Howel, king of North Wales, availing himself of the leisure which the late commotion had given him, increased his army, and in the following year marched

* Comprehending parts of the present counties of Glocester, Monmouth and Hereford.

† Welsh Chron. p. 66.

into England, to retaliate on that country the devastations which the incursions of the English had brought upon Wales.
A. D. 984. In this expedition he was slain,* fighting against the enemies of his country, with a gallantry of spirit worthy the justice of his cause, but little suited to the tenor of his life, which has marked him to posterity as a savage and ruthless tyrant.

A little before this period, terms of agreement were entered into by the legislatures of England and Wales, for securing the peace of the borders, which might seem to put the two countries on an equal footing of independency.†

* Welsh Chron. p. 66.

† Saxon laws published by Wilkins, p. 125. from lord Lyttleton's Life Henry II. vol. II. p. 39. It appears however, that, during the reign of Howel Dda, this prince had dispossessed Morgan Hen, the Lord of Glamorgan, of certain districts in that country, and that this dispute was tried by Edgar, king of England, in a full court of the prelates and nobility of England and Wales, when the lands in dispute were adjudged to Morgan Hen, and his heirs. Speiman's Concilia, p. 414.

The late prince Howel dying without issue, his brother Cadwallon, the second son of Ieuav, took upon him the sovereignty of North Wales; setting aside the rightful succession of Edwal and Ionaval, the sons of Meyric his eldest uncle. Unsatisfied with this act of injustice, and to fix himself, as he thought, more securely upon the throne, he determined on the destruction of his cousins; a practice very common with usurpers; who, besides the usual incitements of ambition, are urged to that barbarous policy by the principle of self-preservation. Ionaval, the eldest of these princes, fell into his hands, and was privately murdered; but Edwal had the good fortune to make his escape, and to see deserved chastisement fall upon the heads of those whose injustice and cruelty had brought such calamities on his family: for Cadwallon had only been in possession of the government one year, and his hands were scarcely cold from the blood of his kinsman, when Meredydd, the son of Owen, the reigning prince of South Wales, invaded his do- A. D. 985.

A. D. 985. minions, and slew that usurper, with his brother Meyric.*

In consequence of his victory, Meredydd, who ruled in Powys by right of his mother, took possession of the kingdom of North Wales.† But the Danes
A. D. 986. invading Anglesey some time after this event, and having taken Llywarch his brother prisoner, with two thousand of his men, they put out his eyes. Intimidated by this disaster, and wounded by the cruel fate of his brother, Meredydd fled into his own country; leaving his new subjects exposed to the ravages of the Danes; and, to heighten their calamities, without a sovereign, and probably without any regular police, a distemper fell on their cattle, which raged with so much violence, as to leave very few remaining in the country.‡

* Welsh Chron. p. 67.

† British Antiq. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 5, 14.

‡ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 65.

Ieuav, the son of Edwal Voel, died at this time; closing the evening of his days in peace and retirement; after he had spent the greatest part of his life in action, and amidst the storms of ambition.* A. D. 987.

This event was soon followed by the death of Owen, the son of Howel Dda, and prince of South Wales.† Upon his decease, Meredydd, his youngest son, disregarding the rights of his two nephews, the sons of Einion his eldest brother, assumed the reins of government, agreeably to the licentious spirit of the times, and the irregular course of succession.‡ In the beginning of his reign, the Danes invaded South Wales, laid waste the country, and destroyed, with a marked animosity, the churches of St. David, Llanbadarn, and other religious places. Unable to check their devastations, Meredydd A. D. 988. agreed to pay them, on condition of their relinquishing the country, one penny for

* Welsh Chron. p. 70. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

every person within his dominions.* But this tribute,† so delusive and dishonourable, and so miserable a substitute for valour and exertion, was never paid, (it may be recorded to their honour), by any of the kings of North Wales. Soon after this event, Edwyn, the nephew of Meredydd, and eldest son of Einion the right heir to the principality of South Wales, having engaged in his interest the Saxons and Danes, over-ran that country with a great army, and obliged the principal chieftains to acknowledge his sovereignty,
A. D. 990. and to give him hostages for their future fidelity. To retaliate upon Edwyn this invasion, Meredydd laid waste the lands subject to the authority of his rival: but on a sudden, when the flames of civil war had desolated the country, and had pro-
A. D. 991. duced a famine, an accommodation took place. The death of the only son of Meredydd, which happened soon after,

* Welsh Chron. p. 71.

† It was called Glwmaen, the tribute of the black army.

cemented more closely the union of these princes.*

During this contest, North Wales had been left without a sovereign, exposed to the ravages of every invader; and in consequence the Danes landed again in Anglesey, and laid waste the whole island. On this emergency, but not on the desertion of Meredydd, a caprice only to be accounted for from the singular levity of the times, the people placed Edwal, the A. D. 992.
son of Meyric, and the right heir to the crown, in the sovereignty of North Wales; the lineal succession having been set aside by the late usurpations.†

On the accession of this prince, he began to regulate the affairs of his kingdom, and to place his subjects in such a posture of defence, as might secure them from the incursions of the Danes, or of other invaders; and he soon experienced the salutary effects of such a wise and

* Welsh Chron. p. 71. † Ibid.

spirited conduct.* For, Meredydd, prince of South Wales, unwilling that his new dominions should be so easily torn from him, invaded North Wales with a powerful army: and having advanced to Llangwm, in the present county of Denbigh, he was met by Edwal, and entirely defeated; losing in the action his nephew Tewdwr Mawr, the youngest son of the late prince Einion.† The prosperity of Edwal was of short duration. He had scarcely returned into his own dominions, elated with success, and exulting in the hopes of enjoying his dominions in peace, when Swane, a Danish chieftain, landed in North Wales. Edwal, disdaining to purchase an uncertain tranquillity at the expence of his honour, determined to expel the Danes by force of arms, or to
A. D. 993. perish in the enterprize. In this gallant attempt he was slain, leaving an only son called Iago.‡

* Welsh Chron. p. 72.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. p. 73.

Soon after this event, the Danes ravaged again the city of St. David; slew the bishop of that diocese; and, meeting with no resistance, laid waste the adjacent territory. Unable to give a check to their ravages, and perhaps ashamed of his late timid and unavailing policy, Meredydd sunk under the calamities of his country, and died of grief; leaving only a daughter, named Angharad, married to Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, and after his death, to Cynvyn Hirdref. By each of these husbands she had children, whose different claims occasioned great civil commotions in Wales.* A. D. 998.

Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, by right of his wife, succeeded to the principality of South Wales.†

This part of the history of Wales is only a recital of reciprocal inroads and injuries,—a series of objects unvaried and

* Welsh Chron. p. 73.

† Ibid. p. 83.

of little importance, which pass the eye in a succession of cold delineations, like the evanescent figures produced by the *camera obscura*. The characters and events are not brought distinctly into view, nor are they sufficiently explained, to enable the historian to judge of their proportions, their beauty, or defects; whence he can neither develope the principles of action, nor trace the connexion of causes with effects, by leading incidents, or by the general springs which govern human affairs. There is therefore danger lest the reader, whose eye has been accustomed to more brilliant scenes, should turn away in disgust from a field so sterile in itself, and which yields so little to the arts of cultivation.

Iago, the son of Edwal the late king of North Wales, being set aside in the succession, on account of his tender years, several competitors arose; and in consequence North Wales exhibited many years a scene of the utmost confusion. The most eminent of these rivals were Cynan,

the son of Howel, descended from the royal line; and a chieftain of the name of Ædan ap Blegored, who founded his pretensions to the crown solely on his ambition and valour. Two rival chiefs, of warlike and irascible manners, are seldom disposed to adjust their claims by the slow procedures of negotiation or policy; but refer them to the more prompt decision of the sword, the chief arbitrator of rights in these turbulent ages. In a battle which immediately ensued, Cynan was slain; and in consequence Ædan ap Blegored was proclaimed sovereign of North Wales.* A. D. 1003.

Having assumed the government, no remarkable incident occurred for some years; until the prince of South Wales invading Ædan's dominions, dispossessed him of his royalty and life. The four sons of the usurper were also slain in the same battle with their father. A. D. 1015.

* Welsh Chron. p. 74, 83.

Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, in consequence of his victory, and disregarding the rights of Iago the son of Edwal, took upon him the government of North Wales; annexing that dignity to the two other principalities. This prince, maternally descended from the royal blood of Wales, had some colourable pretence for his ambition; his mother Trawst being the daughter of Elis, the second son of Anarawd, who was the eldest son of Roderic the Great.*

A. D. 1015.

The wise administration of Llewelyn soon produced national prosperity. To express the felicity of his reign, contrasted with the preceding times, we are told, "that the earth brought forth double; "that the people prospered in all their "affairs, and multiplied wonderfully; and "that the cattle increased in such num-"bers, that there was not a poor man "in Wales, from the southern to the

* Brit. Ant. Reviv. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 14. Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 79.

"northern sea; but every man had plenty, every house a dweller, and every town inhabitants."* The slight touches which history has given of the character of Llewelyn, present him in an amiable point of view. His talents for war and for command, his love of order and of justice; which had enabled him so early to diffuse happiness among his subjects, ought to have rendered him the object of their warmest affections. But so little civilized, and so turbulent were the Welsh; delighting more in war than in the habits of cultivated life, that they treated with coldness and ingratitude a sovereign, whose qualities, in a milder period, would have rendered him the object of love and veneration.

The first appearance of disaffection broke out in the rebellion of Meyric, a chieftain of eminence; but was easily checked by Llewelyn, who slew the traitor A. D. 1019.

* Welsh Chron. p. 84.

with his own hands, and defeated his forces.* So alienated from their loyalty were the people of South Wales, that they engaged a Scotsman of mean birth to be the instrument of their design; imposing him upon the world as the son of their late prince Meredydd; and by the name of Rhun, the disaffected chieftains proclaimed this impostor their sovereign.† The annals of these times do not explain the motives of this extraordinary procedure; nor are we able from such a chaos to throw any light upon the causes of the revolt; except from the resentment which his subjects in that country might feel, because Llewelyn, having been many years their sovereign, had for some time taken up his residence in North Wales. That prince, having intelligence of the rebellion, collected his forces, and marched into South Wales, to give an early check to the evil at its source; and having advanced to Abergwili in Caermarthenshire, he found the

A. D. 1020.

* Welsh Chron. p. 85. † Ibid.

whole power of the country, waiting his approach, under the command of the newly created prince. At the moment, when the two armies were going to engage, Rhun encouraged his soldiers by a confident assurance of victory; after which he privately retired out of the battle. Llewelyn, boldly confronting the danger, and placing himself at the head of his troops, led them on to the charge; calling aloud upon the impostor, whose cowardice so little justified the character he had assumed. This battle was bloody, and on each side disputed with great spirit; for strange as it may appear, the rebels fought with a determined bravery, for a despicable coward, and for an idol of their own raising; while the royalists were scarcely animated in the cause of their sovereign, a native of their country, and of such incomparable merit. At length, the troops of Llewelyn, fired with the extraordinary valour of their prince, and ashamed to be defeated by men over whom they had been often victorious, made a vigorous effort; which put the

enemy to flight; and the impostor, notwithstanding the address he had made use of to save his life, was overtaken and slain in the pursuit. Having thus fortunately put an end to the rebellion, Llewelyn ap Seisyllt returned into North Wales.*

The small remainder of his days this prince passed in tranquillity; but his great and virtuous qualities could not exempt him from the destiny which usually attended the princes of Wales. A. D. 1021. For Howel and Meredydd, the sons of Edwyn,† whose family for some years had been set aside in the succession of South Wales, engaged in a conspiracy against him; and either by their emissaries, or with their own hands, assasinated this brave and amiable prince. He left only one son of the name of Gryffydd.‡ This

* Welsh Chron. p. 85, 86.

† Ap Einion ap Owen ap Howel Dda. The word *ap*, which so frequently occurs in Welsh names, signifies a *son*.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 85, 86.

prince erected the castle of Rhuddlan, in which palace he usually resided; and which afterwards continued to be the royal residence during the life of his son. *

The principle of evil which eventually destroyed the British empire, still remained in the political constitution and in the national character of the Welsh; preying, like a worm at the root, on the vital powers of their different states; and by uniform and slow degrees working their decline and ultimate ruin. Besides other causes of national decay, there was one; which, though a striking defect in their ancestors the Britons, was not inherent in their own government or manners; and that was, except in a single instance, a total inattention to their naval power; although its utility was apparent from their maritime situation, and also from the late example of Alfred. That a

* Dr. Powel's Notes on Giraldus Cambrensis Itiner, Cambræ, cap. X. p. 213. Camden's Brit, p. 687.

prince, like Llewelyn, of ability and vigour, and who was anxious to promote the happiness of his people, should have neglected such an obvious mode of defence, is a proof that he possessed no extent of genius, or that his resources were limited.

The odium naturally excited by the
A. D. 1021. murder of Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, precluded Howel and Meredydd from any chance of attaining to the sovereignty of North Wales; and afforded Iago the son of Edwal ap Meyric, whose title had sunk under the popularity or vigour of the late prince, a favourable opportunity of obtaining possession of the crown; from which his family, lineally descended from Roderic the Great, had been long unjustly excluded. *

Rhytherch, the son of Iestyn, by force of arms, had assumed the government of South Wales. The two brothers, Howel and Meredydd, disappointed in their views upon one kingdom, and excluded

* Welsh Chron. p. 87, 88.

their rightful succession in their own principality, were forced, through mere inability, to remain some years in quiet; but having engaged in their service a body of Irish Scots, they defeated and slew the usurper; and in their joint names took upon them the government of South Wales. The sons of Rhytherch, having raised fresh forces, fought another battle at Hyarthwy with the princes of South Wales, but with no better success than their father had experienced; their army being so effectually routed, that for many years they were unable to support their pretensions to the crown.* These victories might have secured to Howel and Meredydd the quiet possession of their dominions, if the spirit of revenge, kept alive in that age by every incitement which influence the passions, had not retaliated on these princes the murder of Llewelyn ap Seisyllt; for the nephews of that prince engaged in a conspiracy against them, assassinated Meredydd,†

A. D. 1031.

A. D. 1032

* Welsh Chron. p. 87, 88. † Ibid. p. 88.

and forced Howel, the other brother, into exile.* The feelings of humanity are wounded at the recital of such horrid barbarities; and we hasten with pleasure to a period, when the virtue of a few individuals influenced the tide of affairs, and turned it from the lowest ebb of weakness and misery, to a flow of national prosperity.

Gryffydd, the son of Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, had by this time attained to the age of manhood; and already weary of wasting his active spirit in the shade of retirement, he resolved to employ it in the glorious attempt of recovering his father's throne. His youth and activity, and the popular memory of his father, with the pleasing and flattering prospect of novelty, united the public voice in his favour. But Iago, the reigning king of North Wales, not of a spirit to relinquish easily the charms of royalty and his indubitable right, collecting all the force he

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 85.

was able, attempted, with great courage, to oppose the popular current. His army, however, was defeated by Gryffydd, and he himself slain in the action, leaving an only son named Cynan.* A. D. 1037.

Gryffydd ap Llewelyn was scarcely seated on the throne, when the united forces of the English and Danes entered into Wales. With a promptness of courage natural to his years and character, the young prince advanced to the frontier of his kingdom; and meeting the confederates at Crosford, on the banks of the Severn, he entirely defeated their forces.† Elated with success, he proceeded thence into South Wales; and marching through that principality, received the submission of the inhabitants; having a second time driven Howel, the surviving brother, out of his dominions. But that prince retiring to Edwyn, the brother of Leofric Earl of Chester, raised, by his means, an army of English and Danes; with which

* Welsh Chron. p. 89. † Ibid. p. 90.

he marched into Wales against Gryffydd. Fortune, however, continuing propitious, that prince overthrew the foreigners, slew Edwyn, and again forced Howel to a precipitate flight.* Soon after this victory, Gryffydd returned into North Wales.†

A. D. 1038. Howel, the prince of South Wales, having reinforced his army, made another attempt to recover his dominions; and, too sanguine of success, he brought his wife into the field, to share in the triumphs of a victory he was in full expectation of obtaining.‡ Gryffydd, receiving intelligence of this event, marched with his usual celerity into South Wales; and meeting Howel at Pencadaer in Caermarthenshire, he there gave him battle, and entirely defeated his army. The unhappy prince escaped with difficulty; and, to render his fate more deplorable, his wife was taken prisoner, and fell into the hands of his rival. The beauty of this lady captivated the heart of her conqueror.

* Welsh Chron. p. 91. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

Instead of protecting her honour, or yielding up this princess to her injured husband, she was detained by Gryffydd as his concubine.* In times less savage than these, such an action, measured by civilized ideas of heroism, incapable of offering violence to weakness, or of insulting the feelings of a vanquished enemy, would have been received with general abhorrence. But it does not appear that Gryffydd lost any reputation with his subjects; the Welsh regarding whatever they had taken in war, even the wives of the vanquished, as the lawful property of the conqueror.† So great is the force of habit upon the human mind, as to counteract the first and the noblest principles of nature and religion.

Stung with the keen resentment which such injuries would naturally excite, Howel came the third time into South Wales, in hopes of revenging the late in- A. D. 1040

* Welsh Chron. p. 91.

† Lord Lyttleton's Henry II.

sult upon his honour; and, by another brave effort, to recover his wife and his crown. He had not been there long before a large body of foreigners landed in the country; who, spreading themselves abroad, committed great depredations. Howel, though desirous of reserving his strength for the main contest with the king of North Wales, could not be indifferent to their ravages; but, with much gallantry of spirit, and with an honest desire of conciliating the affections of the Welsh, he suddenly attacked the foreigners, and forced them, with great loss, to retire to their ships.*

In the course of these events, the attention of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn had been engaged in an affair of some importance. Cynan, the son of Iago ap Edwal, who, on his father's death, had fled into Ireland for safety, having engaged in his interest the king of Dublin, whose daughter he had married, landed in North Wales; and

* Welsh Chron. p. 92.

either by accident, or by a stratagem of his own, contrived to take Gryffydd prisoner. But the Welsh, being apprised of the disaster, and anxious for the safety of their king, pursued the Irish; recovered him out of their hands; and, following them with great slaughter to their ships, obliged them to return into Ireland.*

Howel, the prince of South Wales, by the assistance of the Danes, and of those friends who still adhered to his fortunes, raised such a force as might enable him once again to make head against Gryffydd. That prince, alive to his interests, and that his own territories might not be rendered the seat of war, instantly marched into the enemy's country; and defeating the forces of his rival, pursued them to the source of the Towi, a river in Caermarthenshire; where a second action, more bloody than the former, ensued; in which the unfortunate Howel was slain, and the greater part of his army cut in

A. D. 1041.

A. D. 1042.

* Welsh Chron. p. 93.

pieces.* Thus was the full measure of vengeance poured upon the heads of this prince and his family, for the murder they had lately committed on Llewelyn ap Seisyllt.

New competitors arose, on the death of Howel, to dispute with Gryffydd the sovereignty of South Wales. These were the sons of Rhytherch ap Iestyn; who asserted their claim to that principality, because their father for a little time had enjoyed its government. Their pretensions were opposed by Gryffydd with his usual activity and vigour, but not with the same decisive good fortune; for, after a bloody and obstinate engagement, which lasted until night, both armies, equally fatigued and unwilling to renew the combat, returned to their respective countries, in order to collect reinforcements.† Excepting a slight insurrection, which was easily repelled, the two states, however, enjoyed, under the dominion of Gryffydd,

* Welsh Chron. p. 92. † Ibid.

from causes not accounted for in the Welsh annals, a season of unaccustomed tranquillity.

It was probably during this interval of peace, that Gryffydd appears to have paid some attention to naval concerns, by procuring from a foreign country a few ships of war, which were manned by foreign sailors. Though the motives do not appear, which induced him to an undertaking so novel to the Welsh, yet it arose, no doubt, from the obvious policy of securing from ravages the maritime parts of his dominions, and of importing corn and other provision from foreign markets.*

Cynan, the son of Iago ap Edwal, having remained quiet in Ireland, since his late fruitless attempt, collected a body of troops among his Irish adherents, with a view to recover, if possible, his inheritance, and hereditary dignity of his family; A. D. 1050.

* Lord Lyttleton's Life of Henry II.

but approaching the coast of North Wales, there suddenly arose a violent storm, which destroyed or dispersed his fleet in such a manner, as to render the expedition ineffectual.*

This interval of peace little suiting the warlike spirit of Gryffydd, he made an inroad into the marches about Hereford, and was opposed by the English, and by a Norman garrison in that castle. But
A. D. 1052. the contest having ended in favour of the Welsh prince, he returned into his own dominions, enriched with the spoils of the country.†

Rhys, the brother of Gryffydd king of North Wales, a man of a bold and enterprizing spirit, having committed frequent depredations in the English marches, had become, on that account, the object of particular resentment. Being defeated, and taken prisoner, in an incursion he

* Welsh Chron. p. 94.

† Stowe, p. 96. Roger Hovedon, p. 442.

had made on the borders, he was put to death at Bulundune, by the command of king Edward the Confessor, who in this instance assumed a sovereign authority, A. D. 1053. and his head was sent to that prince, who then kept his court at Gloucester.*

Gryffydd, the son of Rhytherch ap Iestin, having recovered from the blow which he had formerly received, at this time raised an army, to endeavour once again to wrest the principality of South Wales from Gryffydd, the king of North Wales. The activity of this prince defeated his ambitious design; for, instantly A. D 1054. marching against him, he easily routed his forces, and his competitor was slain in the action.†

An incident which happened soon after enabled Gryffydd to revenge his brother's death, and the insult which had

* Simon Dunelme, sub. Ann. 1053. Stowe's Chron. p. 97. Matt. Westm. p. 323. Hist. Angl.

† Welsh Chron. p. 98.

been offered to the independency of the crown.

Algar, Earl of Chester, having been banished by Edward the Confessor, on slight suspicion, or on no grounds of offence, had retired into Ireland; where engaging in his service eighteen vessels, he landed in North Wales, and put himself under the protection of Gryffydd. These leaders, acting in conjunction with each other, ravaged the borders of England; and, actuated by the same spirit

A. D. 1055. of vengeance, they proceeded into Herefordshire, and laid waste that fertile country. To oppose this dangerous inroad, Ranulph, Earl of Hereford, raised an army composed of English and Norman troops. With this force, he met the confederates advancing within two miles of Hereford, and offered them battle. Gryffydd accepted the challenge, with all that confidence which long success naturally inspires. The earl had ordered the English forces to fight upon horseback, contrary to the custom of their

nation; but when all was prepared to begin the onset, that nobleman, and the Norman troops which he himself commanded, fled out of the field, daunted by the appearance of the Welsh, or not able to stand the shock of their furious charge. The English soon followed the example of their leader; and the Welsh, pursuing them with great rapidity, cut in pieces four or five hundred of the fugitives: and having entered into Hereford, they burned the minster, and slew seven of the canons, who rashly attempted to defend it: they then levelled the walls, and set the city on fire: and putting to death many persons of note, and carrying others into captivity, they returned in triumph, loaded with much valuable spoil.*

The pacific spirit of the Confessor was roused by this formidable invasion; and he commanded Harold, the son of Earl

* Saxon Chron. p. 169. Roger Hovedon, p. 443, 444. Simon Dunelme, p. 188. Matt. Westm. p. 324.

Godwin to collect forces from every part of the kingdom, which were to assemble at Gloucester. At the head of this army that general marched into North Wales; and advancing, without any resistance, to the Snowdun mountains,* he lay there encamped, expecting the approach of the enemy. Unable to oppose the English forces, Gryffydd, and the Earl of Chester, retired into South Wales. As soon as Harold was informed of their retreat, he returned to Hereford, leaving, however, the greatest part of his army to preserve his conquests, and give an early check to any future resistance of the natives. During his residence in that city, he rebuilt its walls, and added new fortifications to that frontier post. He also entered into a negotiation with Gryffydd; and at length concluded a peace, not much to the honour of England; as Algar was indulged with a pardon, and the full

* Saxon Chron. p. 169. Roger Hovedon, p. 443, 444. Simon Dunelme, p. 188. Matt. Westm. p. 324.

enjoyment of his earldom: and no compensation appears to have been made for the ravages, or the expence of the war.* The peace being concluded, that nobleman returned with his fleet to Chester; where the mariners and soldiers remained until they had received their pay.† Algar then repaired to the court of Edward, and obtained from that prince the confirmation of his pardon and dignity.‡ It is not easy to account for the conduct of Harold, in retreating so suddenly out of Wales, and in concluding so dishonourable a peace with the Welsh, over whom his arms had gained an unusual advantage.

The easy victory lately obtained over the English and Normans, though com-

* Roger Hovedon, p. 443, 444. Simon Dunelme, p. 188. Mat. Westm. p. 324.

† Simon Dunelme, p. 188. Holinshead's English Hist. p. 192.

‡ Roger Hovedon, p. 443, 444. Simon Dunelme, p. 188. Math. Westm. p. 324.

pletely and heavily armed, added to the usual incitements of plunder, and national hatred, induced Gryffydd ap Llewelyn, in open violation of the peace, to make another inroad into the country about Hereford. In this incursion the bishop of that diocese * was slain at Glasbury, as well as the viscount, or sheriff of the county, and many of the English also, both laymen and ecclesiastics.†

Though the late peace had been broken by this violent outrage, no reprisals appear to have been made; and through the mediation of Harold, and of Leofric earl of Mercia, the tranquillity of these hostile nations was for a time restored. ‡

A person in the situation of Algar must hold the favour of his prince by a very precarious tenure; as the clemency of

* Matt. Westm. p. 325. Roger Hovedon, p. 144.

† Simon Dunelme, p. 188.

‡ Simon Dunelme, p. 189. Roger Hovedon, p. 444.

sovereigns is usually of uncertain duration, when extorted by force or expediency. Lying again under the suspicion of treason, he was a second time banished the realm; and sought an asylum in the dominions of Gryffydd, the king of North Wales; by whose aid, and the assistance of a fleet from Norway, which accidentally arrived upon the coast, he was once more reinstated in his earldom.* Edward, justly incensed at the late barbarities, and violation of faith, and dreading, no doubt, the consequence, if Wales should become the refuge of his mal-content subjects, determined to employ the whole force of his kingdom in the conquest of that country. He trusted the execution of this important design to Harold, the most distinguished nobleman in his court for valour and abilities.† This general, having raised a very considerable army,

A. D. 1058.

A. D. 1063.

* Simon Dunelme, p. 189. Roger Hovedon, p. 444.

† Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Roger Hovedon, p. 446. Matt. Westm. p. 329.

marched with such celerity and conduct into North Wales, that he had nearly surprised Gryffydd in his palace at Rhuddlan. The Welsh prince, scarcely apprised of his danger a moment before the English presented themselves at the gates, as the only means of safety, threw himself, with a few of his attendants, into one of his ships, at that time equipped in the harbour, and sailing that instant, fortunately made his escape.* The loose annals of these times do not inform us to what country he retired in his distress.

Mortified that the Welsh king should escape so unexpectedly out of his hands, Harold, in resentment, burned his palace, and set on fire all the ships of war and the other vessels remaining in the harbour of Rhuddlan.† He then returned to Bristol; and having fitted out a fleet, on a new plan of decisive operation, he sail-

* Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Roger Hovedon, p. 446. Math. Westm. p. 329.

† Ibid.

ed round the coast of Wales,* with a view, no doubt, of preventing the importation of corn, and of other provisions.

In the mean time, a strong body of horse, under the command of the earl Tosti, the brother of Harold, marched, by the previous command of the English king, into North Wales.† As soon as the English general had intelligence of the arrival of his brother, he landed, and joined him with his infantry; leaving his fleet, with orders to cruise as before along the coast of Wales.‡ On the junction of these troops, Harold made himself master of the level country,§ Being sensible, in such a country as Snowdun, that his soldiers ought not to be encumbered by their arms, he provided his infantry with targets made of hides, and other lighter kinds of armour;|| more suitable

* Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Roger Hovedon, p. 446.
† Ibid.
‡ Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 47.
§ Ibid.
|| Historia Ingulphi, p. 68. Gale's Script.

for service in a mountainous region broken by rivers, defiles and forests. His cavalry he left on the plains, under the command of his brother; excepting only a few horse, which, supported by small parties of heavy armed infantry, he ordered to follow as a body of reserve. Marching himself at the head of his troops, he advanced into the mountainous parts of the country; and having driven the Welsh with great slaughter, out of their inmost recesses, he at length compelled them to sue for peace.* Thus, by the united effects of vigour, activity and conduct, coinciding with other causes, did Harold subdue a people who had been hitherto invincible. In want of the animating presence and spirited activity of their prince, without the means of concerting necessary measures of defence, and probably straightened for provisions; it is no wonder that the Welsh, surprised and dispirited, should sink under the

* Camden's Britannia, p. 545, Gibson's edition, from Giraldus Cambrensis.

impression of the English arms. On this occasion Harold set up several pillars of stone; on each of which was engraved this Latin inscription, *Hîc Fuit Victor Haraldus;* to perpetuate the glory of having passed mountains, which had hitherto been the inaccessible barriers between the spirit of freedom and the rage of conquest.*

So totally subdued were the Welsh, that they submitted to the tribute which in ancient times they had usually paid; and gave hostages to Harold, as pledges of their future obedience.† Under the impression of fear, or incensed at his late desertion, they, likewise, renounced allegiance to Gryffydd, their sovereign.§

Considering his active and warlike spirit, we can attribute the absence of

* Camden's Britannia, p. 545, Gibson's edition, from Giraldus Cambrensis.

† Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Math. Westm. p. 329.

‡ Ibid, Hist. Ingulphi. p. 68. M. West. p. 329.

Gryffydd to no other cause, than to the general disaffection of his subjects; at a time, too, when his own interests, and the very safety of his country demanded his presence. Whatever were his motives of absence, whether the revolt of his subjects, or inability to return on account of the English fleet, this prince came into North Wales in the summer of the follow-

A. D. 1046. ing year.* As soon as he landed, he attempted to assert his own rights, and to vindicate the common cause against Harold; who, by the incitement of Caradoc, the son of Gryffydd ap Rhytherch, had invaded South Wales, and had subdued a great part of that country.† Instead of rejoicing at his presence, or eagerly ranging under his standard, this gallant prince was put to death by his own subjects, at the instigation of Harold, and during his march into South Wales.‡ As the first fruits of their vassalage, this improvident and ungrateful people sent

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 48.
† Welsh Chron. p. 101. ‡ Ibid.

his head to the English general; together with the prow of the ship in which he had returned.* Besides two sons, Meredydd and Ithel, Gryffydd left a daughter called Nêst; who was afterwards married to Trahaern ap Caradoc, king of North Wales. †

In this manner died Gryffydd the son of Llewelyn ap Seisyllt; whose princely qualities entitled him to a happier fate. His talents for government, and the vigour and prosperity of his arms, soon turned the tide of affairs, vindicated the honour of his kingdom, and gave it an unusual importance. His amiable manners, and his abilities in war, made him equally the idol of his people, and the terror of his enemies; and had rendered a reign of thirty-four years unclouded by any adversity; until the late storm, which perhaps it was not in his power either to elude or repel, in some measure shaded its

* Sim. Dunelme, p. 191.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 95, 101.

glory, and deprived this excellent prince of his life, and his country of its freedom.

It is but too probable that this foul murder was perpetrated, through the influence of Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, the sons of Cynvyn by Angharad, the mother of the late king; as these princes were, by the appointment of king Edward, invested, on this occasion, with the sovereignty of North Wales and Powys. * At the same time, the English king gave the principality of South Wales to Meredydd, the eldest son of Owen ap Edwyn.† These princes were obliged to take an oath of fealty to the king of England, and to pay the full tribute, which ever had been paid to any of his predecessors.* A law, at this time, was made by earl Harold, which enacts, that if any Welsh-

* Welsh Chron. p. 102. Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Wm. Malmsbury, p. 94.

† Welsh Chron p. 102.

‡ Math. West. p. 329. Sim. Dunelme, p. 191. Chr. de Mailros, p. 159.

man, coming into England without licence, was taken on that side of Offa's dyke, his right hand should be cut off. This statute shews, that, so late as the reign of Edward the Confessor, this dyke was considered as the discriminating line between the two nations. *

An incident happened in the late reign, which though not very striking at first, at length arose into historical importance. Macbeth, the tyrant of Scotland, having caused Banquo to be murdered, of whose integrity and influence he was jealous; his son Fleance to avoid the tyranny of that usurper, fled into North Wales, † and was kindly received by Gryffydd ap Llewelyn; in whose court he was long entertained with the warmest affection. During his residence in the Welsh court, he became enamoured of Nêst, the daughter of that prince; and violating the laws of

* Camden's Britannia, p. 585, Gibson's edition. Speed's Chron. p. 401.

† Buchanan Hist. Rer. Scot. p. 193. Welsh Chron. p. 98.

hospitality and honour, by an illicit connection with her, she was delivered of a son who was named Walter. In resentment of so foul an offence, Gryffydd commanded Fleance to be put to death; and reduced his daughter to the lowest servile situation, for having suffered herself to be dishonoured by a foreigner. As the youth, who was the fruit of this illicit connection, advanced in years, he became distinguished for his valour and an elevated mind. A dispute having arisen between him and one of his companions, the nature of his birth was retorted upon him by his angry antagonist in terms of reproach; which so irritated the fiery spirit of Walter, that he instantly killed him; and afraid of abiding the consequences of the murder, he fled into Scotland. On his arrival in that kingdom, he insinuated himself among the English, who were in the train of queen Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling.*

* Welsh Chron. p. 98. Dr. Powel's notes on Giraldus Cambrensis Itiner. Cambræ, lib. 1. cap. II. p. 88.

He soon acquired, by his wisdom and conduct in this country, the general esteem; and his abilities unfolding as they were employed in the public service, he was appointed lord steward of Scotland, and receiver of the revenues of the realm. From this office, he and his descendants have taken the surname of Stuart; and from this root have sprung the royal house of that name, and many other branches of illustrious families in Scotland.*

As Caradoc, the son of Gryffydd ap Rhytherch, had been the cause of the late invasion by Harold, he was in hopes of obtaining, on the death of the late prince, the government of South Wales. Instead of satisfying the ambition of the Welsh chieftain, that nobleman banished him the country; and, either placing no confidence in a man whom he knew to be subtile and deceitful; or finding that he could not obtain from him a lordship, which he was desirous of possessing near

* Buchanan, p. 198.

Hereford, he caused Meredydd, as before related, whom he had found more compliant to his will, to be invested with the sovereignty. On this lordship, Harold erected a very splendid house, at Portaskewith in Monmouthshire; * and having frequently given an invitation to king Edward, who at that time resided at Gloucester, that prince at length paid him a visit.

This mark of favour excited the envy of Tosti, the eldest brother of Harold; which, a little time after, was highly inflamed by a trifling incident. Being at a feast with the king, in his court at Windsor, that prince ordered Harold to present him with a cup of wine; a preference which had such an effect on the passion and the pride of Tosti, that setting aside every sense of fear or decency, he seized his brother, and dragged him to the ground by the hair of his head. † For this offence he was banished the king's presence.

* Simon Dunelme, p. 122. † Ibid,

Retiring from the English court in great fury, he proceeded to Hereford, where Harold was preparing an entertainment for the king: he there murdered all the servants belonging to his brother; and cutting off their heads, legs, arms, and other parts of their bodies, he put them into the vessels of wine, metheglin, ale, and beer, which were reserved for the royal entertainment. He then sent his sovereign a contemptuous message,—that there was no occasion to provide any other than fresh provisions, as he himself had taken care to leave a sufficiency of preserved and powdered meats. * For this second offence, he was banished the realm for life.†

This singular barbarity had not been perpetrated long, when Caradoc, the son of Gryffydd ap Rhytherch, came to Portaskewith, the house lately erected by

* Matt. Westm. p. 331. Welsh Chron. p. 104, 105. Simon Dunelme, p. 192. Camden's Brit. p. 597.

† Ibid.

Harold; and, to revenge the disappointment he had lately received from that nobleman, slew the labourers who were there at work, with all his people and servants; and then defacing the structure, he carried away the materials, which, at a great expence, had been brought to ornament the building.* Whatever illustrates the character of man, or discriminates nicely the spirit of the times, will be interesting to the reader of sentiment; though the incidents we have lately recorded form no leading links, which are essential in the chain of our history.

A. D. 1066. In consequence of the death of Harold, and of the decisive battle of Hastings, William, Duke of Normandy, had mounted the English throne. During the conquest of England by that prince, the Welsh remained inactive spectators of the scene before them; viewing it with the same indifference, as if it had been a struggle between two foreign nations.

* Matt. Westm. Welsh Chron, &c.

Indeed, it was not likely that they should feel themselves interested in the prosperity of either side; knowing, whatever was the event, that in their turn they themselves might become the victims of the conqueror's fury: and it was certainly right conduct to suffer two people, from whose ambition they had every thing to fear, to weaken or to destroy each other by mutual hostilities. But it is strange that a brave people like the Welsh, during the favourable moments which this contest afforded, did not, by a spirited enterprize of some effect and importance, wipe away the late national dishonour; and by wise, united, and vigorous measures, attempt to recover the independence they had lost.

Notwithstanding the want of spirit, or general inattention of the Welsh at this juncture, Bleddyn and Rhiwallon, the kings of North Wales, during the absence of William in Normandy, joined Edric, Earl of Mercia, in a desultory incursion upon the borders, and laid waste the

A. D. 1066. 1st of William the Conqueror.

country of Hereford, as far as Wye-bridge.*

These princes had scarcely returned into their own territories, when Meredydd and Ithel, the sons of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn, the late king of North Wales, appeared upon the stage as competitors for the crown. The young princes, in support of their indubitable rights, raised an army, and fought a severe battle with the reigning princes, at a place called Mechain, in the county of Montgomery. In this action, one of the rival princes on each side, Rhiwallon and Ithel, was slain;
A. D. 1068. and Meredydd, after seeing his army defeated, was forced to fly for safety amidst the inmost recesses of the mountains. The openings into these mountains being strictly guarded by Bleddyn rendered his escape impossible; and the young prince miserably perished by cold and hunger. This victory left Bleddyn ap Cynvyn

* Simon Dunelme, p. 197. Welsh Chron. p. 109.

sole sovereign of North Wales and Powys.*

Caradoc, the son of Gryffydd ap Rhytherch, not brooking his late disappointment, raised a large body of Normans; and joining them with his own vassals out of the district of Gwent, attacked Meredydd, prince of South Wales, on the banks of the Rympyn, a river in that country; whose forces, being much inferior in point of strength, were easily routed, and he himself slain in the action. Caradoc did not long enjoy the fruits of his victory, as he died soon after, and left his son Rhytherch to succeed to the government of South Wales.†

Though no general or concerted measures of resistance had taken place against the tyranny of William, a few insurrections arose from the discontent or patriotism of the English lords. Under cover

* Welsh Chron. p. 109.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 109.

of celebrating a marriage at Norwich, between the sister of the Earl of Hereford, and Ralph, Earl of Norfolk and Suffolk, many of the nobility in England conspired against William; and, in the midst of their carousals, entered into a solemn engagement to defend their liberties.* To these nuptials several of the Welsh chieftains were invited, out of respect to the mother of the Earl of Norfolk, she being a native of that country; and in hopes, perhaps, of inducing the princes of Wales, by such an act of courtesy, to favour their enterprize.† In the morning, when sober reflection had returned, Waltheof, a Saxon nobleman, and one of the conspirators, struck with the disloyalty of the enterprize, or its danger, repaired to the king in Normandy, and informed him of the conspiracy, with the part he himself had acted. That monarch, on receiving this intelligence, came into England; and with his usual vigour, as-

A. D. 1073. 7th of William the Conqueror.

* Matt. Paris, p. 7. Watts's edition.

† Welsh Chron. p. 111.

sisted by the spirited measures of his ministers, gave a check to the rebellion before it had matured into strength:* and this insurrection, like all others, when they prove ineffectual, only served to render the conqueror's power more absolute. Two noblemen, and others of the conspiracy, died by the hands of the executioner.† And many of the Welsh, under the pretext of treason, were involved in the same fate, though invited to the nuptials merely as spectators of the ceremony; some of whom were hanged; others had their eyes put out; and the remainder were banished the realm.‡ This stroke of *assumed* justice points out the savage and decisive character of William the Conqueror: and the tame submission of the Welsh, without reprisals or shew of resentment, marks the low ebb of national spirit at this dishonourable period.

* Stowe's Chron. p. 105.

† Welsh Chron. p. 111.

‡ Mat. Paris, p. 7. Stowe's Chron. p. 105

The same fate, which had ended the career of many of the Welsh princes,
A. D. 1073. put a period to the days of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, the king of North Wales and Powys, This prince, from motives we are not able to account for, was assasinated by Rhys, the son of Owen ap Edwyn, the youngest son of Howel Dda; and who was aided, in this cruel transaction, by the Welsh chieftains who inhabited the banks of the * Towi.†

The institution of a code of laws, and the general esteem in which Bleddyn ap Cynvyn was held by his subjects, for his amiable manners and the mildness of his government, might have transmitted his name with honour to posterity, if deep suspicion ‡ had not fixed a stain upon

* *Ystrad Tywi.* † Welsh Annals, p. 111.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 102. That the reader may be enabled to form his own judgment on the justice of this suspicion, the author has subjoined the very words of the Welsh Chronicle, as translated by Dr. Powel: when speaking of the qualities of Gryffydd, he adds this remarkable passage:—" and

his memory for the murder of his sovereign; and if he had not betrayed the liberties of his country, and yielded up its honour, by deigning to receive his crown from its hereditary enemy, and by consenting to hold its authority as a tributary * of the English princes.†

unworthy of that cruel death, that the ambitious desire of rule did provoke his unkind subjects, and unnatural cousins, to prepare for so noble a prince, and so gentle a master, as he was." This assertion, with the other leading circumstances, in consequence of the transaction, will defend the author, he trusts, from the charge of severity or rashness.

* Historia Ingulphi, p. 68. Hovedon, p. 446.

† Bleddyn ap Cynvyn had by several women many children,—Meredydd, Llywarch, Cadwgan, Madoc, Ririd, and Iorwerth. Welsh Chron. p. 111.

HISTORY

OF

WALES.

BOOK V.

FROM THE DEATH OF BLEDDYN AP CYNVYN TO THE DEATH OF GRYFFYDD AP CYNAN.

ALTHOUGH the late prince Bleddyn ap Cynvyn had left many children, Trahaearn ap Caradoc, his cousin, by the consent of the people, was raised to the throne of North Wales. Besides being himself a chieftain of eminence, he had some colourable pretence to that honour; having married Nêst, the daughter of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn.*

A. D. 1073.

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 95, 105.

Amidst other causes of evil arising to the Welsh from their indistinct ideas of government,* the little attention which they paid to hereditary succession was a source of infinite misery; the jarring claims of various competitors kept their different states in a continual ferment; infused a deeper ferocity into the manners of the people, and weakened their power of resisting a sagacious and enterprising enemy.

Soon after the accession of Trahaearn, Gryffydd ap Cynan, the son of Iago ap Edwal, thought this a favourable opportunity of asserting his right to the crown; from which he had been unjustly excluded by the late usurpations. This prince, during the late reigns, had sought refuge in Ireland, his mother being a native of

* It may be proper here to remark, that though the lineal succession was frequently interrupted, yet the Welsh always paid a regard to the same blood royal, except in the instance of Ædan ap Blegored.

that country; and having procured aid from some of the Irish princes his kinsmen, he landed a body of troops in Anglesey, and soon reduced that Island to his obedience.* Encouraged by his early success, and the support of some powerful chieftains, † Gryffydd passed over the straits of the Menai, and encamped his army in Caernarvonshire; intending by degrees to penetrate farther into the country. Trahaearn, alarmed at this unexpected invasion, hastily raised what force he was able, and marched to attack his rival upon Bron-yr-Erw, near the castle of Harlech in Meirionydd; whom he defeated, and obliged to retire into Anglesey. ‡

Rhys ap Owen, of the royal house of South Wales, and Rhytherch the son of Caradoc, were at this time the sovereigns

* Welsh Chron. p. 112.

† Vita. Griff. fil. Conani, a manuscript life of that prince, written in the Welsh language, as is supposed, near the time in which he lived.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 113.

of that principality. The tranquillity of their reign was early disturbed by an insurrection raised by Gronw and Llewelyn, the sons of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn ;* to revenge the murder committed on the late prince their grandfather. Though a victory was soon after obtained at Camddwr in Caerdigan by the two chieftains of Powys, it apparently produced no effect ; as Rhys remained the sole sovereign of South Wales, on the murder of Rhytherch his colleague. This event was followed by another enterprize undertaken by the sons of Cadwgan ; and though these princes obtained a second victory at Gwaynyttyd, it does not appear that this success produced any thing decisive in their favour ; as Rhys continued for some time longer to enjoy his government.† A. D. 1074.

The king of North Wales, having forced Gryffydd ap Cynan to fly into Anglesey ; and regarding the distracted state of

* Strength of the army. † Welsh Chron. p. 113.

South Wales as favourable to his designs of conquest, invaded that country. Rhys, supported by all the power of his subjects, marched to oppose the invader. A very fierce action ensued at Pwllgwttic, in which the army of South Wales was defeated; and that prince, to avoid being taken prisoner, was forced to fly from one place to another; until at length, falling into the hands of his enemies, he and his brother Howel, were murdered in revenge of the death of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn.* Even in these miserable times, when private resentment superseded the sober decision of the laws, the sword of justice, though usurped, seldom suffered the guilty to escape; as a keen sense of injury, and, what was deemed a sacred obligation, revenging the wrongs of their ancestors, were principles essential in hereditary feuds, and were deeply engrafted in the manners of the ancient Welsh.

* Welsh Chron. p. 113.

In this state of affairs, Rhys ap Tewdwr,* lineally descended from Howel Dda, and whose family had been long excluded from their rights by the capricious succession of the times, put in his claim to the crown; and was elected prince of South Wales by the unanimous voice of the people.† A. D. 1077.

Gryffydd ap Cynan, during these transactions, had received a reinforcement out of Ireland. A similarity of interests having inclined this prince, and Rhys ap Tewdwr, to form an alliance, they joined their armies; resolving, by every effort in their power, to support each other, and

* The son of Einion ap Owen ap Howel Dda.

† According to Vaughan of Hengwrt, the immediate territories of this prince were only the present counties of Caerdigan and Caermarthen; as Pembroke, Brecknock, Gwent or Monmouthshire, and Glewising or Herefordshire, were governed by their several Reguli; though there is no doubt but all these acknowledged the sovereign authority of South Wales. British Ant. Revived, p. 7, 8. Welsh Chron. p. 114.

to vindicate the rightful succession. To oppose an union so dangerous to his safety, Trahaearn ap Caradoc assembled his forces, and met the two princes upon the mountain of Carno,* where an engagement ensued, disputed with the valour and obstinacy natural to rivals who had every thing to hope and to fear. In this action Trahaearn was slain, and his army defeated.† This victory seated Gryffydd ap Cynan, and Rhys ap Tewdwr, upon the thrones of their ancestors.‡ And thus, by a sudden turn in affairs, meeting, we suppose, the wishes of the people, was the lineal succession restored; which, as long as it continued, was a means of softening the asperity of the times, and of encreasing the national strength.

A. D. 1079.

After the late event, the king of North

* Called Mynydd Carn, on account of a large Carnedd upon it, covering the remains of a great warrior, who had in ancient times been slain and buried there.

† Vita Fil. Gryff. Conani. Welsh Chron. p. 114.

‡ Ibid.

Wales invaded Powys, and laid waste that territory.* This prince's prosperity, however, was very soon embittered by a deep reverse of fortune. A native of Wales, called Meirion Goch, entered into a conspiracy to betray him into the hands of the English. Agreeably to the plan which had been previously concerted with the earls of Shrewsbury and Chester, a strong body of infantry and horse were stationed at Rug in Edeyrnion. The snare being laid, Gryffydd ap Cynan was desired by the treacherous Welshman, at the instance of the two English lords, to give them the meeting, under the colour of a friendly conference. With a simplicity, which neither agreed with the character of the times, nor with the dictates of prudence, the Welsh king came to the place appointed, attended only by a few retainers, whom he had brought out of Ireland. He had no sooner made his appearance, than he was seized, and carried in chains

* Brit. Ant. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt; p. 16. Vita Fil. Griff. Conani.

to the castle of Chester. His attendants were allowed to depart, without receiving any other injury than the loss of a thumb, which was cut off from the right hand of each. This instance of whimsical barbarity might arise from the instigation of Meirion Goch; who, from the prejudices of his country, would detest them as foreigners, and who might also resent the partiality which this prince had always entertained for the Irish.

Gryffydd remained many years in captivity; a confinement, no doubt, that was rendered more bitter, from a sense of his own inability of affording protection to his subjects, and of preventing the fatal innovations, which, during that period, were taking place in South Wales and in Powys. The Earl of Chester, having disarmed so formidable an enemy, committed dreadful ravages in North Wales; and in order to preserve the conquests he had made, and render his inroads more safe, he erected a fortress at Aberllienawg, in Anglesey, one also at Caernarvon, an-

other at Bangor, and another in Merionydd; and all which he furnished with strong garrisons.*

Resenting, it is probable, the late inroad, which the Welsh, in conjunction with Edric, Earl of Mercia, had made into the marches of England, William the Conqueror invaded their country with a powerful force. The Welsh princes, unable to oppose his arms, or awed by the influence of his mighty name, submitted, without resistance, to pay him homage, and to take the oath of fealty, as due from vassals to a superior lord.† These hostile intentions being set aside by their peaceable demeanour, king William, agreeably to that spirit of piety, which in these

* Camden's Brit. p. 655. Vita Griff. Fil. Conani.

† Math. Paris, p. 9. Lord Lyttleton says that William, satisfied with this mark of vassalage, exacted no tribute, as from a conquered country; the feudal laws regarding all as subjects who were admitted to homage, and of course exempting them from such impositions.—Lord Lyttleton's Hist. of Henry II. vol. II. p. 49.

days tinctured the mind of the fiercest warrior, marched with his army to the city of St. David, and offered up his devotions at the shrine of that Saint.* A few years after his expedition into Wales, this great king died in Normandy, and was succeeded by William Rufus, his eldest son. On the death of the Conqueror, the spirit and genius of the Welsh nation revived, and with them revived also the variety of evils which are incident to intestine divisions.

A. D. 1079. 13th of William the Conqueror.

A. D. 1087.

The three sons of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, desirous of recovering the sovereignty which they had lost by the murder of their father, and by the usurpation of Trahaearn ap Caradoc, raised an insurrection in South Wales against Rhys ap Tewdwr.† That prince, not being able to oppose a force suddenly encreased by numbers of men bred in the licentiousness of the times, retired into Ireland; and

* Welsh Chron. p. 115.

† Ibid. p. 117.

having powerful alliances in that country, he procured a body of troops, composed of Irish and Scots, with which he returned into South Wales, and was joined by many of his own subjects. The princes of Powys, sensible that dispatch was the life of such an enterprize as theirs, by a rapid movement, attacked Rhys, on the sudden, at a place called Lhechryd, in Radnor, and before his army was strengthened by the reinforcement which was hastening to join him. In the battle which ensued, fortune decided against the insurgents. Two of the brothers, Madoc and Ririd, were slain, and Cadwgan, the other brother, saved his life by a precipitate flight. This commotion being fortunately ended, Rhys ap Tewdwr, with rewards expressive of his gratitude, dismissed his auxiliaries.*

The terror which had been impressed upon the minds of the Welsh, by the decisive character of the late English

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 110.

monarch, and which had unnerved the public arm, subsided with the death of that fierce warrior. Early in the reign of his son William Rufus, an insurrection broke out upon the borders, excited by
A. D. the earls of Hereford and Shrewsbury.
1088. The Welsh, eager to embrace the first favourable moment for the recovery of their liberties, joined the mal-content lords; and rushing with great fury upon the English marches, like a fire which had been long pent up, they ravaged and laid waste the country about Worcester,* to the gates of that city.† They were, however, in the event, repulsed with great slaughter, by the valour of the citizens, excited by the spirited conduct of Wulstan their bishop.

* Called, by the Romans, Brangonia; by the Britons, Caer-Wrangon; and by the Saxons, Worcestre. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 26.

† Annales Waverlenses, p. 136. Simon Dunelme, p. 214. Mat. Paris, p. 12. Welsh Chron. p. 118.

An incident happened at this time, springing from a trivial occurrence, which produced a change in the affairs of South Wales the most important and decisive; and which in some measure was the cause of the final ruin of Cambria. Llewelyn and Einion, chieftains of eminence in South Wales, and the sons of the lord of Pembroke, rose in rebellion against Rhys ap Tewdwr their sovereign; and they likewise drew into their treasonable designs Gryffydd ap Meredydd, another chieftain of the country. Having joined their forces they marched to attack prince Rhys, who then resided at Llandudoch, in the county of Pembroke; where an action ensued, in which the rebels were defeated, and Gryffydd taken prisoner; the two other leaders having saved themselves by flight. The rebel chieftain was instantly put to death as a traitor; * the first instance we have seen, in these miserable times, of legal justice having dared to assert her prerogative.

* Welsh Chron. p. 119.

Einion, desperate by the late event, and afraid to trust his safety with any of his own kindred, associated with Iestyn ap Gwrgaint, lord of Glamorgan; * between whom there was a similarity of situation and interest, he being at that time in arms against his sovereign. To bind themselves still more closely to each other, it was agreed that Einion should marry the daughter of Iestyn, on condition that he procured a body of Normans to assist in their enterprise; as that chieftain had served in the English armies, and had formed an acquaintance with the Norman nobility.† Influenced by these powerful motives, Einion hastened into England.

The design was agreeable to the enterprizing spirit of the age. The English princes, too, had always employed, in their various attempts of subjugating Wales, this principle of Machiavelian

* The territory of *Morganwg*, or Morgan.

† Welsh Chron. p. 119.

policy,—*Divide et Impera.* And at this time, the treason of two men, coinciding with the views of Rufus, infused a fatal poison into the bosom of their country. A. D. 1090.

Robert Fitzhammon, a gentleman of the king's privy chamber, and baron of the realm, undertook the adventure. He selected, for this enterprize, twelve knights of considerable note, who agreed to serve under him with a large body of forces.* These troops, early in the following year, landed in Glamorgan, and were received with great honour by Iestin, the lord of that country; who, joining his forces with the Normans, laid waste the territories of Rhys ap Tewdwr. At the time of this invasion, the prince of South Wales was above ninety years old. With a spirit and activity uncommon at his age, he marched in person against the rebels; and meeting them upon the Black Mountain,† near Brecknock, after a severe and A. D. 1091.

* Welsh Chron, p. 119.

† On Hirwain, between Neath and Merthyr Tydfil.

bloody conflict, his army was vanquished, and this ancient and gallant prince was himself slain in the action.* He left two sons by his wife, the daughter of Rhiwallon ap Cynvyn,—Gryffydd, and another son who, at his father's death, was a prisoner in England.† In this manner died Rhys ap Tewdwr, attempting to repel the deepest oppression, and fighting for the independency of his country. With this warrior sunk the glory of the principality of South Wales; after whose death, betrayed by the vices of its own princes, and torn in pieces by foreign adventurers, it lost its ancient importance, and gradually fell into decay.

The treason of the Welsh chieftains having thus attained so fortunate an issue, Iestyn kept all his engagements with the Normans very faithfully; not only dis-

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 112. Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 80. Polidore Virgil, lib. X. p. 171.

† Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 81. Welsh Chr., p. 120.

missing them with the stipulated pay, but with presents suitable to the importance of their service. Einion demanded of Iestyn his daughter in marriage, agreeably to the promise he had made; but prosperity having rendered that chieftain proud and insolent, he rejected his suit, and even imbittered the refusal by treating him with disdain. Resenting a conduct so faithless and ungrateful, Einion hastened after the Normans, in hopes of overtaking them before they had sailed. On his arrival at the sea shore, he found they were already embarked; and as he might not be heard at so great a distance, he waved his mantle as a signal for them to return. Fitzhammon and his knights immediately put to shore, to know the cause of so extraordinary a procedure. As soon as they had landed, Einion laid open his grievances, and likewise the facility of subduing a territory likely to remain unprotected by the Welsh princes; who must have seen with an eye of indignation the late conduct of Iestyn. Touched in some measure with the in-

juries of their friend; but still more, it is probable, with the prospect of possessing so fertile a country, Fitzhammon and his knights readily engaged in the views of Einion; and contrary to every principle of honour, suddenly invaded the territory of Glamorgan. Little expecting such a turn of fortune, Iestyn was easily dispossessed of his territories* They then proceeded to parcel out the domain agreeably to feudal ideas. Fitzhammon, reserving to himself the principal parts, with the seigniory of the whole; gave the remainder of that province, to be held as fiefs under himself, to the twelve knights † who had shared in the adven-

* Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 80. Welsh Chron. p. 120. from Ran. Cest. lib. VII. cap. VII. Marianus Scotus.

† The castle and manor of Ogmore, was given to William de Londres; the lordship of Neath, to Richard Greenfield; that of Coyty, to Paine Turberville; Llan-Blethyan, to Robert St. Quintine; Talavan, to Richard Siward; the castle and manor of Penmarc, to Gilbert Humfrevile; the castle and manor of Sully, to Reginald Sully; the manor of East Orchard, to Roger Berkrolles; that of Peterton,

ture; leaving the rough and barren mountains the property of Einion. *

In this manner were the lords of the marches † established in Wales; possessing, in all cases, except the power of granting pardons for treason, *Jura regalia.* In the castle of Caerdiff, ‡ the lords of Glamorgan usually kept their chancery, exchequer, and court; where the twelve knights, by their tenures, were obliged to attend, one day in every month, having separate apartments in the castle for that purpose. § Each of the other lordships had a distinct jurisdiction, enjoying the same rights with that of Glamorgan, ex-

to Peter le Soor; that of St. George, to John Fleming; that of Fonmon, to John St. John; and the manor of St. Donats to William le Esterling. See Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 115.

* Camden's Britannia, p. 609. Gibson's edition. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 80. Welsh Chron. p. 120.

† An old English word signifying *boundary*.

‡ *Caerdâf*, or City on the river Tâf.

§ Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 115.

cept in cases of wrong judgment, when an appeal might be made to the superior court. All disputes in matters of equity arising in the several lordships, were determined by the chancellor, in the chancery court of Glamorgan.*

The fortunate issue of the late adventure raised among the Norman nobility an ardent spirit of enterprize. The king of England threw powerful incentives in their way; alluring them by motives of interest and power, those strong incitements to human conduct. Several barons petitioned the crown for licence to possess, under homage and fealty, those territories which they might conquer in Wales. This liberty given to the English lords, of obtaining at their own charge the territories of the Welsh, though springing out of a wise policy, was apparently founded on the absurd idea of forfeiture; because that people had renounced the allegiance, to which they

* Welsh Chron. p. 122.

had submitted through necessity, during the operations of Harold, and the decisive reign of the Norman conqueror.

The situation of South Wales, rendered defenceless by the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr, favoured the designs of these military adventurers. Among the foremost of whom was Bernard de Newmarche; * who easily took possession of the province of Brecknock, containing three cantrevs; and to colour his title with some degree of popularity, he married Nêst, a grandaughter of Gryffydd ap Llewelyn.† Roger de Montgomery earl of Shrewsbury was the next who did

* Several gentlemen came at this time to Brecknock with Bernard de Newmarche; to whom he gave the following manors, which their heirs enjoy to this time; the manor of Abercynric and Slowch to the Aubreys; the manor of Llanhamlach and Tal-y-Llyn to the Walbiofs; the manor of Gilston to the Gunters; and the manor of Pontwilym to the Havards, &c. See Welsh Chron. p. 150. Camden's Britannia, p. 590. Gibson's edit.

† Welsh Chron. p. 148.

homage to the king for Caerdigan. Arnulph, the younger son of that nobleman, obtained likewise the great lordship of Pembroke.* In this easy manner, by the desultory enterprizes of a few Norman lords, was the principality of South Wales subdued; the ancient seats of the *Dimetæ* and *Silures;* who, supported only by native bravery, had given a check to the Roman arms; and whose descendants had bafled, until this period, the utmost efforts of the Saxon and Norman princes.

The kingdom of North Wales, and the principality of Powys, were not long secure from the incroaching spirit of the times. The earl of Shrewsbury did homage for all Powys; and brought under his subjection some districts in that territory; particularly the town and castle of Baldwyn.† This important

* Welsh Chron. p. 151.

† Built by Baldwyn, lieutenant of the Welsh Marches in the reign of William the first. See Camden's Brit. p. 650. Gibson's edit

fortress he fortified more strongly: and called it Montgomery, after the name of his family.* The principality of Powys from this period had little concern in the interests of Wales. The policy of England soon rendered that territory, which had been for ages a barrier of defence, a dangerous neighbour upon the confines: and it became, by the defection of its princes, an instrument of mischief in the hands of the English against the national quiet and safety.

Hugh Lupus, earl of Chester, likewise, did homage for Englefield and Rhyvonioc; with the country extending along the sea shore from Chester to the water of Conway. Ralph Mortimer did the same for the territory of Elvel; as did Hugh de Lacie for the lands of Euas; and Eustace Cruer for Mold and Hopedale † These barons endeavoured to secure their conquests by erecting fortresses; ‡ and,

* Welsh Chron. p. 152. † Ibid. p. 151.

‡ Vaughan's British Ant. Reviv. p. 18.

as far as they were able, by settling in them English or Norman inhabitants. At this time, Bristol, Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, and Chester, were rebuilt, or fortified; and formed a line of military posts upon the frontiers.* Thus the last assylum of the Britons was invested almost on every side, or broken into by their enemies. The kingdom of North Wales, at this time reduced to the island of Anglesey, to the counties of Meirionydd and Caernarvon, and to a part of the present counties of Denbigh and Caerdigan, still preserved the national character and importance. The natives of that country, aided by the virtue of their princes, became more formidable than ever to the English; and, at times, acquiring union with additional vigour from despair; their enemies, instead of being able to make new conquests, held

* Manuscript relating to the marches of Wales, in the possession of Philip Lloyd Fletcher, Esq. of Gwernhaeled in Flintshire.

those which they had already obtained by a precarious tenure.

The late incidents having produced a striking change in the situation of Wales, and the lords of the marches having introduced into that country a new system of jurisprudence; some account of those lords, and of the system which they introduced, may be interesting to the reader. The conquest of Wales had been always a leading object in the politics of England; not only from the desire of more extensive dominions, but as a means of preventing in future the devastation and misery, which the animosity of a warlike and an injured people had produced on the English borders. The utility, likewise, of employing in foreign enterprizes a martial nobility, inclined the Norman princes to encourage, by every incitement of advantage and honour, the dangerous designs of subduing, or of making settlements in Wales.

To enable the English lords to preserve the obedience of the people they had subdued, the kings of England allowed them to assume, in their several territories, an absolute jurisdiction.* But they did not hold this authority under any grant from the crown: it was only for the present connived at by the prince; and arose, as a wise measure, out of their particular situations. There is not, it is said, any record to be found in the Tower, or in other parts of England, of a grant having been given to any lord of the marches, to possess the authority annexed to that dignity. The king's writs, issuing out of the courts at Westminster, did not extend into any part of Wales, except into Pembroke, accounted at this time a portion of England; neither did the sheriffs, nor other officers of the king, execute his writs or precepts in any other part of the country.

The high privileges incident to the lords

* Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Life of Henry VIII.

of the marches could not, for many reasons, be held by charter. The kings of England, when they gave to any baron such land as they might conquer from the Welsh, could not fix those immunities on any certain precinct; not knowing which, or whether any, would be eventually subdued. The lords themselves were not solicitous to procure such immunities; as it frequently happened that those estates of which they had taken possession were afterwards recovered by the Welsh, either by composition with the kings of England, or by force of arms. Another cause of their not possessing any charters of prerogative, was, that such privileges,—so high in their nature,—so royal and united to the crown, could not, by the laws of England, be disunited from the same. It was therefore thought a wiser course, to suffer them to establish, of their own authority, such royal jurisdictions, rather than to hold them under a grant from the sovereign, which, if at any time called into question, might be adjudged of no

force. Those lordships, which were conquered at the expence of the English princes themselves, were subject to a more regular jurisdiction; being governed, in general, by the laws of England.*

The lords of the marches, selecting the most agreeable and fertile parts of their territories, erected castles for their own residence, and towns for the accommodation of their soldiers. It was in this manner, that most of the present towns and castles on the frontier of Wales were built. This appears by the ancient charters given to such towns by those lords who first conquered or founded them, expressive of immunities to the burgesses and freemen; few or none of them having purchased such liberties from the kings of England till many years after: and when that was done, which was seldom the case, they were only confirmations of privileges granted them by their ancient lords. Among other towns and castles, about

* Lord Herbert's Life of Henry VIII.

this time built in Wales, were Pembroke, Tenby, and Haverfordwest, erected by Strongbo, William de Valence, and the Hastings. Newport was built by Martin, Lord of Cemaes; the town and castle of Cydweli by Londres, and afterwards enlarged by the Duke of Lancaster; the towns and castles of Swansea, Oystermouth, Loughor, Radnor, Buellt, and Rhaiadr, were erected by the Bruces, the Mortimers, and the Beauchamps; Blaenllyvni by Herbert; Abergavenny by Dru de Baladon; and, in after-times, Ruthin by the Lords Grey; and Denbigh by Lacie, Earl of Lincoln. The greatest part of these were ancient towns or castles before the Norman conquest, which had been either injured or destroyed by the devastations of war, or in the lapse of time.

The lords of the marches held under the kings of England, by the tenure of serving in wars with a certain number of their vassals, and of furnishing their castles with strong garrisons, and with all military implements.

The English laws were, for the most part, administered in the marches of Wales: their tenures, likewise, were principally English; being transmitted by fine, recovery, feoffment, and livery of seisin. Some lords, from motives of prudence, permitted their tenants, who were natives of the country, to enjoy many of their ancient laws, which were not repugnant to those of England, or injurious to their own interest. Among other concessions in favour of the Welsh, were the usage of gavel-kind, and the transfer of lands by surrender in court, which gained admission into the jurisdiction of these lordships under the name of customs, though anciently they had formed part of the common law of Wales. A sufficient number of people not being easily obtained to colonize the conquered countries, it was an obvious policy in the lords of the marches, to sooth the asperity of conquest, by allowing the Welsh to enjoy many of their ancient customs. As the mode of transfer, as well as the principles

of succession, were different among the two people, two courts were established in many lordships, in which the custom of each nation prevailed. There were, however, a few lordships, though entirely held by English tenures, in which the tenants were permitted the custom of gavel-kind, although they transmitted their lands by feoffment. These estates were said to be held by English tenure, and by Welsh *dole*. In those lordships where the land was thus divided, and which was held by knight's service, the lord had the wardship of all the sons as well as daughters: and as this was a point of great advantage, it might induce such lords to encourage in their tenants the custom of dividing their estates among their sons. In many lordships, the Welsh laws were not in use, and English customs entirely prevailed. The whole jurisprudence depended entirely on the will of the first conquerors.

The chief qualification of a lord of the

marches was, that he should hold of the king in *capite*. Though conquest was the general principle on which his right was founded, in some instances his dignity proceeded from a different cause; as in the case of Powys; a great part of which was never gained by conquest, but changed into lordships marchers by the following means:—The princes of Powys, seeing the perilous situation of their country, and actuated by fear, or interested motives, made their submissions to Henry the First, and agreed to hold under him their several territories, paying the same obedience and duties which the lords of the marches owed to the crown of England. Thus did several of the lordships in Powys differ from others. In one point, however, they agreed,—that they did, and of necessity must, hold of the king in *capite*. This circumstance, together with renouncing obedience to the princes of Wales, was all that was at first expected, by the kings of England, from the lords of the marches. The barony of

Powys had not any manors which held under it, like other lordships which were obtained by conquest; and for the same reason there were neither knights fees, nor plough, nor ox lands, in those lordships; these divisions being introduced into Wales by the English and Norman lords; and were entirely unknown to the Welsh, and to the ancient Britons.

Having thus given a short account of the introduction, and the nature of the lords marchers in Wales,* established in the country at different periods, we shall reassume the subject of the history.

North Wales had been left many years without a sovereign, in the power of the

* This account of the lords marchers is taken from a manuscript in the possession of Philip Lloyd Fletcher, Esq. of Gwernhaeled, in Flintshire.

earl of Chester, and exposed to his merciless ravages. Since the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr, no chieftain had arisen in South Wales to re-kindle the spirit of patriotism; and that country, wrested, in a great measure, from the hands of its native princes, had been parcelled out among Norman adventurers.* In this state of things, when the prosperity of Wales appeared irretrievably lost, her fortunes were changed on a sudden, by the enterprizing spirit of a few individuals, possessed of neither power nor consequence.

Gryffydd ap Cynan had languished twelve years in captivity,† neglected by his subjects, or, what is more probable,

* Brady relates, out of Domesday, that William the Conqueror granted to Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, North Wales, in farm, at the rent of £40 per annum; besides Rhôs and Rhyvonioc. Page 201.

† Camden's Brit. Gibson's edit. p. 656.

without their having had the ability to procure his release. The situation of this prince excited the compassion of a young man, named *Kynwric Hir*, a native of Edeyrnion, who determined, if possible, to effect his escape out of prison, though at every hazard to himself. The enterprize was bold, generous, and full of danger.—Attended by a few followers, he repaired to Chester, under pretence of purchasing necessaries: and having, early in the evening, gained admittance into the castle, while the keepers were deeply engaged in feasting, he carried on his back the captive prince, loaded with chains, and conveyed him with safety into his own dominions. It is with pleasure we contemplate an action, like this, heroic in itself, and directed by a principle of masculine virtue.

Though Gryffydd ap Cynan had thus fortunately escaped out of the hands of his enemies, he had many difficulties still to encounter; as his own subjects were either dispirited, or alienated from him,

and the English were masters of the country. His danger was sometimes so great, that he was obliged to lie concealed in woods, and in other places of security: but after he had endured a variety of evils, and taken those castles which the Normans had erected during his captivity, he recovered the entire possession of his kingdom.*

It was not likely that the impatient spirit of the Welsh, their sovereign having obtained his liberty, would remain quiet under the late usurpations. Gryffydd ap Cynan, fired with resentment for the miseries which he himself and his country had endured, with Cadwgan, the son of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, invaded the territory of Caerdigan, and slew great numbers of the English, who had lately settled in that country.† After this enterprize, the

* Vita Griffith. Fil. Conani.

† Welsh Chron. p. 152. British Antiq. Revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 22.

two princes returned into their own territories.

The Normans having procured a reinforcement out of England, proposed, by a sudden inroad into North Wales, to revenge the injuries they had lately sustained. This design was discovered by Cadwgan: and that prince, suddenly intercepting them as they marched through the forest of *Yspys*, defeated their forces, after an obstinate resistance, and obliged them to retreat, with considerable loss. The rapid movements of the Welsh prince did not allow his enemies leisure to breathe. Pursuing them closely in their flight, and assisted by the general consternation, he laid waste the country of Caerdigan and Pembroke; demolished every fortress lately erected, except the castles of Pembroke and Rydcors; which by their strength, or the bravery of the garrisons, baffled his power. Having thus A. D. 1092.
recovered, by so fortunate an enterprize,

a great part of South Wales, Cadwgan returned into Powys.*

Elated with such unusual prosperity, and animated by a spirit of patriotism, the king of North Wales, and the sons of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, again united their forces. Not content with expelling the enemies of their country, they carried their arms into the marches of England; a spirit of ferocity directing their operations. The Welsh princes divided their forces into different parties; one of which was defeated by the Earl of Shrewsbury.† The other bodies, not meeting with any resistance, with the force and impetuosity of mighty torrents, spread along the English borders devastation and ruin. The counties of Chester, Hereford, Worcester, and Salop, were laid waste. The cities, the towns, and many villages, were

* Welsh Chron. p. 152.

† Annales Waverleienses, p. 139. from Ang. Script. Historiæ.

plundered, or set on fire, or levelled with the ground; and, with a cruelty that dishonoured the justice of their cause, the inhabitants, without any distinction of age or of sex, were carried away prisoners, or perished by the sword.

William Rufus, inflamed with resentment, that a people, who had yielded a tame submission to his father, should dare to contemn his authority, and attack him in his own dominions, raised a great army, and marched in person into the confines of Wales. The Welsh with great spirit repulsed his attacks; and and after losing great numbers of horses and men, he was forced to return with dishonour into England to reinforce his army. Flushed with their success, the Welsh princes, on the retreat of the English, ventured to lay siege to the castle of Montgomery; reputed the strongest and the best fortified of any in Wales. The Normans gallantly defended the place for many days; but the Welsh, having found means to undermine the

A. D. 1094. 7th of William Rufus.

walls, took it by storm; and after putting the garrison to the sword, levelled that fortress with the ground.*

One common spirit of asserting their freedom animated the Welsh at this fortunate moment. The English, who inhabited South Wales, were attacked in
A. D. their different settlements; and after
1094. some desultory resistance, were obliged to evacuate the country. In the course of these hostilities, Roger Montgomery earl of Salop, William Fitzeustace earl of Gloucester, and other English noblemen were slain.† Thus at length did this gallant people, whose spirit had long been depressed by the hand of power, recover, with somewhat like elastic force, the importance of their ancient character.

* Brompton's Chron. p. 991. Simon Dunelme, p. 220. Polydore Virgil, p. 273. Walter Hemingford Canon of Gislebourne, p. 465. Annales Waverleienses, p. 139. from Ang. Script. Historiæ.

† Welsh Chron. p. 154

Though the Normans had been driven out of South Wales, they were in no measure reconciled to the loss of their fertile possessions. They provided fresh soldiers to garrison the different castles which they had erected in the country; besides furnishing each of them with a proper stock of provisions. Returning into South Wales, once more to contend for the prize with the native inhabitants, they were assaulted by the sons of Ednerth ap Cadwgan, and driven back into England with great slaughter. Their several fortresses, after a spirited defence made by the garrisons, were yielded up to the Welsh; who for some time were left in quiet possession of a great part of the country. At the same time, two chieftains of North Wales, joining their forces with those of the sons of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, one of the princes of Powys, made an inroad into Pembroke, then in the possession of Arnulph the son of Roger Montgomery; and after having laid waste the whole country, they returned

into their respective territories enriched with plunder. The castle of Pembroke, lately erected by the above-mentioned lord, had baffled all the attempts of the Welsh; that fortress having been gallantly defended by Gerald de Windsor, the governor. *

The late disasters, and the disgrace which he in person had received, excited in the fierce mind of Rufus the keenest indignation. He entered Wales a second time, at the head of a royal army. During his march, the activity of the Welsh cut off his provisions, harrassed his troops, and considerably diminished his numbers both in men and horses; for keeping aloof in the woods and marshes, or on the tops of the mountains, they suddenly attacked the English, with great advantage, in the defiles of the country, and in the passages of rivers.† And such

A. D. 1096. 9th of William Rufus.

* Welsh Chron. p. 154.

† Brompton's Chron. p. 992. Math. Westm. lib. II. fol. 12. Polydore Virgil, p. 174.

was the valour of the Welsh, and such the conduct of their leaders; so great were the difficulties likewise which Rufus found in attempting to penetrate through the country, or in drawing the enemy to a battle, that in despair he gave up the enterprise; and after refortifying some castles upon the borders, returned with additional disgrace into England.*

The late exertions of the Welsh, and the prosperous turn in their affairs, must surely give pleasure to every reader of sentiment, who feels a tender concern for the interests of humanity; and who has seen a spirit of private rapacity, directed by the policy of England, and acting in concert with its power, entrenching on the natural rights of a people, inferior in every means of resource, and whose only support was the justice of their cause, and an ardent valour inspired by freedom.

* Brompton's Chron. Mat. West. Polydore Virgil.

Discomfiture and disgrace having of late attended on the arms of England, a different mode of conducting the war was adopted. Many of the Norman nobility were encouraged to undertake, at their own charge, the conquest of the Welsh; and about this time, or before, many barons had acquired considerable settlements, in those parts of Wales which had been lately subdued, or along the frontiers of the country. Among others, Peter Corbet settled on the lordship of Caurs, Mortimer on Wigmore, Fitz Alen on Clun and Oswestry, Monthault on Hawarden, Fitzwarren on Whittington, Roger le Strange on Elesmere, Drude Baladon on Abergavenny, and Gilbert on Monmouth.*

A. D. 1096. At the secret instigation of Owen ap Edwyn, lord of Englefield, and of other chieftains in North Wales, a very formidable army invaded that country, under

* Manuscript treatise on the marches, in possession of Philip Lloyd Fletcher, Esq.

the command of the earls of Chester * and Shrewsbury. † Gryffydd, the king of North Wales, and Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, not being able on a sudden to collect a force sufficient to oppose them, and not having the necessary confidence in their troops, gave way for a time, and retired to the mountains for security. The two earls, meeting with no resistance, continued their march into that part of Caernarvonshire which lies opposite to Anglesey. Gryffydd ap Cynan, seeing the danger which threatened the seat of his government, passed over the water of Menai, attended by his associate Cadwgan; and having received a slight reinforcement out of Ireland, he seemed determined to defend the island.‡ At this critical moment, Owen ap Edwyn, whose daughter had married the Welsh king,

* Hugh *Vras*, or the fat earl of Chester.

† Called by the Welsh Hugh *Goch*, or Hugh with the read head.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 155.

and who was likewise his principal minister, openly avowed his treason, and joined the English army with his forces. The Welsh princes, alarmed at the perfidy and revolt of so powerful a chieftain, and unable to oppose the united force of the enemy, withdrew into Ireland. * No longer protected, the island of Anglesey fell an easy prey to the English; who poured upon the inhabitants the full measure of retaliation for the cruelties which had been lately committed in the borders of England. It is painful to relate the singular and savage barbarities exercised on this occasion; resembling more the deliberate malice of ruffians, than the impetuosity of soldiers. Some of these people had their hands cut off, others their feet; some had their eyes pulled out, others were castrated, and great numbers were massacred. A priest of the name of Kenred, venerable for his years and his wisdom, having taken sanctuary in a church, the earl of Shrewsbury com-

* Welsh Chron. p. 155.

manded him to be taken from thence; ordered one of his eyes to be pulled out, his tongue to be cut, and caused him likewise to be deprived of his manhood.* We should have drawn a veil over such a scene of barbarity, if the design of history had been only to adorn a story; and not to point the instructive moral, or to delineate, with a faithful pencil, the portraiture of men and manners.

The safety of North Wales, at this perilous crisis, depended upon a train of fortuitous circumstances. Magnus the son of Harold king of Norway, having taken possession of the Orkneys, and of the Isle of Man, arrived accidentally upon the coast of Anglesey. Hearing of the cruelties committed by the English, and touched with a sense of generous pity, he determined to land his forces, and to preserve the miserable inhabitants from destruction.† The English endeavoured to oppose the Norwegians. In the attempt,

* Brompton's Chron. p. 994. Fabian, p. 315.
† Welsh Chron. p. 156. Vita Griffith. Fil. Conan.

the earl of Shrewsbury was slain. The prince of Norway, observing that Nobleman resolute in opposing his landing, and whose impetuous valour had carried him into the sea, levelled an arrow; which through the opening of his armour pierced his right eye, and reaching his brain, he fell down convulsed into the water. The Norwegian prince, on seeing him fall, exultingly cried, "Let him dance" * This accidental stroke of justice, seen by the eye of superstition, made the Welsh to conclude, that the arrow had been directed by the immediate hand of the Almighty.

The death of the earl of Shrewsbury produced some disorder amongst the English and obliged them to abandon the shore. The earl of Chester, on this disaster, suddenly retreated into England; leaving Owen ap Edwyn to enjoy for a time the fruits of his treason. The Norwegians finding that the English had not left any thing to plunder, immediately re-embark-

* Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. cap. VII. Simon Dunelme, p. 223

ed.* This attempt was the last enterprise of any of the northern nations, to plunder or subdue this country.†

After an absence of two years in Ireland, Gryffydd ap Cynan, attended by Cadwgan, returned into Wales; and concluded a peace with the English, upon terms of great disadvantage. The dominions of Gryffydd, by this treaty, were reduced to the island of Anglesey; and Cadwgan retained only the the territory of Caerdigan, and a small part of Powys.‡ Unacquainted as we are with the springs of action, it is not easy to account for the long absence of Gryffydd; or to trace in his present conduct any marks of that vigour, and decision of character, which distinguished the early operations of his reign.

A. D. 1098.

* Welsh Chron. p. 156. Hume's Hist. Eng.

† In the course of this expedition, the Earl of Chester rebuilt the castle of Diganwy, the seat of the ancient princes of Wales. King's Vale Royal of Cheshire, p. 48.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 156.

It might seem, as if some degree of retaliative justice, distinguished the death of William Rufus king of England; who was slain by accident, as he was hunting in the New Forest in Hampshire. His younger brother, Henry the first, succeeded to the English crown.

A. D. 1100.

A. D. 1101.

Robert Belesmo, the son of Roger Montgomery earl of Shrewsbury, and Arnulph his brother earl of Pembroke, having engaged in rebellion against Henry, drew into their treasonable designs Meredydd, Cadwgan, and Iorwerth; the three princes of Powys, and sons to the late king Bleddyn ap Cynvyn. The English king marched in person with a large army against them; and repairing to the marches of Wales, laid siege to the castle of Bridgenorth, Finding this fortress too strong on account of its situation and warlike appointments, to afford him the prospect of reducing it easily, he sent privately to Iorwerth, one of the Welsh princes; in hopes, by such

motives as were likely to touch his resentment, or his interest, to detach him from the rebels, and incline him to engage in his service. He offered him the territories which the two earls possessed in Wales without paying tribute, or taking any oath of allegiance; and at the same time, he recalled to his memory the many and deep injuries which his country had received from the families of those lords. These offers, arfully directed to the feelings of the Welsh prince, were gladly accepted. Iorwerth immediately joined the king; and with the usual animosity of a deserter, detached his troops to ravage the estates of the two English earls. The perfidy of his conduct threw his brothers and the rebel lords into the utmost dismay; they despaired of being able to make head against the king, and, within a little time after, the confederacy was dissolved.*

As soon as king Henry had returned into England, Iorwerth arrested his brother

* Welsh Chron. p. 158.

Meredydd, and confined him in prison; his other brother Cadwgan he took into favour, and gave him the territory of Caerdiff, and a part of Powys. He then repaired to the English court, in full confidence of receiving from Henry a suitable recompence for the services he had lately performed. The king, however, wanting no longer his assistance, not only received him with great coldness, but deprived him also of those territories which he had received as the reward of his treachery; and he was dismissed from the court covered with shame and disappointment.* Richard de Belmarsh the Bishop of London, was, at this time, appointed *Warden* of the marches. This prelate summoned Iorwerth to attend him at Shrewsbury, under pretence
A. D. 1102. of consulting about public affairs; but as soon as the Welsh prince made his appearance, he was arrested for treason, found guilty of the real or alledged charge and committed to prison.† The distrust

* Welsh Chron. p. 159. † Ibid. 160.

of a traitor, and the dread of the effects arising from disappointed ambition, were no doubt the real motives which produced his disgrace.

A series of feuds and hostilities, unpleasing in the recital, arise, at this period, in the history of Wales. These intestine divisions, too descriptive of the manners of the Welsh, were the means of accelerating the ruin of their states; destroying by degrees their union and their strength, and affording opportunities to the English kings of detaching the Welsh chieftains from the interests of their country.

Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, in the Christmas holidays, invited the chieftains who resided in the country adjacent, to a feast at his castle in some part of Pembroke. In the course of their festivity, *mead*, the wine of this country, having raised their spirits, Nêst* the wife of Gerald, A. D. 1108.

* Camden's Brit. p. 360. Gibson's edit.

the governor of Pembroke castle, was spoken of in terms of admiration; the beauty and elegance of whose person, it was said, exceeded those of any lady in Wales. The curiosity of Owen the son of Cadwgan was strongly excited to see her; and he had little doubt of obtaining admittance, as there was a degree of relationship subsisting between them. Under colour of a friendly visit, the young chieftain, with a few of his attendants, was introduced into the castle. Finding that Fame had been cold in her praise, he returned home deeply enamoured of her beauty, and fired with an eager desire of enjoying her. The same night, returning with a party of his retainers, as daring and dissolute as himself, he secretly entered the castle; and in the confusion produced by setting it on fire, surrounded the chamber in which Gerald and his wife slept. Awaked by the noise, Gerald rushed out of bed to inquire into the cause of the disturbance. His wife, alarmed at the danger which threatened her husband, prevented

his opening the door; and advising him to retire to the Privy, she assisted him in pulling up the board; by which means, and her farther assistance, he let himself down, and made his escape. The ruffian and his followers then broke open the chamber door; and after a diligent search, not finding Gerald, they seized his wife and two of his sons, besides a son and a daughter which he had by a concubine; then leaving the castle in flames, and ravaging the country, he carried off Nêst and the children into Powys. This adventure gave Cadwgan the greatest uneasiness. Afraid lest Henry might revenge on his head the atrocious action of his son, he came into Powys; and requested Owen that he would send back to Gerald his wife and children, as well as the plunder which he had taken. The young chieftain, whose love was heightened by the possession of his mistress, refused to restore her. Whether she yielded to the violence of her lover from choice or from necessity, is uncertain; but he soon after sent back to

A. D. 1108. Gerald all his children, at her particular request.*

Owen being afraid of receiving from the warden of the marches the punishment due to such an outrage, escaped with all his associates into Ireland. His father Cadwgan secreted himself for a time in Powys; but having satisfied king Henry of his innocence concerning the late affair, he was permitted to remain in his own country, and to enjoy the town and estates which he held in right of his wife; † he was some time after reinstated in the possessions which had belonged to him in Caerdigan, on paying to the king a fine of one hundred pounds.‡

After many years confinement, Iorwerth ap Bleddyn was released out of prison, and restored to his territory; on his paying a fine of three hundred pounds in

* Welsh Chron. p. 164, and Wynne's History of Wales, p. 129

† Welsh Chron. p. 165

money, or of that value in cattle or horses. *

Soon after his release, this prince and his brother Cadwgan repaired to England, to transact with Henry some affairs of of their own. † During their absence, Owen the son of Cadwgan, who was just arrived out of Ireland, and whose turbulent spirit was always in motion, murdered a bishop, with all his attendants, on his journey to the English court; ‡ and then retired for security into his father's territories. This outrage being reported to Henry, Cadwgan was called to answer for the conduct of his son; but the excuses he made not having satisfied the king, his estates were taken from him; that prince telling him, at the same time, that his territories should be given to one, who with a firmer hand, would be able to restrain such disorders. He settled on him a pension for life; and charged him on his allegiance, not to enter into any part of Wales until licence should be given.

A. D. 1109.

* Welsh Chron, p. 166, 167, 168. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

The territory of the Welsh prince was given to Strongbow earl of Strigill, on the usual condition of obtaining possession by the sword. This baron soon after landing in Caerdigan, easily accomplished his views of conquest; and to render his possessions more secure, he erected two fortresses; one of which he built on the sea shore,* about a mile from Llanbadarn, and the other at a place called Dingeraint, on the river Teifi.†

Madoc ap Ririd,‡ a cousin, and a wild associate of Owen, the savage chieftain of Powys, returned out of Ireland. Having secreted himself in the territory of his uncle Iorwerth, that prince, dreading the recent fate of his brother Cadwgan, gave orders to his vassals that they should treat his nephew as an enemy. Madoc, upon this, collected a body of outlaws; with whom he lay concealed amidst the rocks and recesses of the

* Near Aberystwyth.
† Welsh Chron. p. 169.
‡ Ap Bleddyn ap Cynvyn.

woods, waiting for an opportunity of revenging the affront. He likewise entered into a friendship with Llywarch ap Trahaearn, between whom and the family of his uncle, subsisted a deadly feud. Having intelligence that Iorwerth intended, on a certain night, to sleep at Caereinion in the county of Montgomery, the two chieftains with their followers surrounded the place at midnight. The Welsh prince and his attendants, starting from their sleep, defended the house with much spirit a considerable time. The assailants, unable to make any impression, set it on fire. In this extremity, the people within endeavoured to make their escape; in doing which, some of them had the good fortune to push through the enemy, others were slain in the attempt, and the remainder were burned in the house. Iorwerth himself, attempting to force his way, rushed on the spears of the assailants; but being overpowered, he was driven back, and perished in the flames.

As soon as Henry heard of this ferocious transaction, calling Cadwgan into his presence, he received that prince into favour; and gave him the territory which his late brother had possessed in Powys; and, from motives which do not appear, he even extended his grace unto Owen, desiring his father to send for him out of Ireland; whither he had fled on account of the late murder of the bishop.*

Madoc, finding his uncle Cadwgan in possession of his late brother's territories, though his hands had been already stained with the blood of one kinsman, determined the first opportunity to imbrue them still deeper, by the murder of his other uncle Cadwgan. This prince, having reduced his territories, in some degree, to a state of tranquillity, by a strict administration of Justice, repaired to Pool†

* Welsh Chron. p. 170, 171.

† *Trallwng.*

in Montgomeryshire, attended by the elders of the country; where he began to erect the castle of Powys, in which he intended to reside. During his residence at Pool, he was on a sudden assaulted by his nephew Madoc, and basely murdered before he had time to fly, or even to prepare for his defence. Thus died, after a variety of fortunes, Cadwgan the son of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn; dignified by Camden with the title of the renouned Briton; a prince, whose valour, sense of justice, and other milder virtues, might, in any age but this, have exempted him from a death so cruel, and so unworthy of his character.

On the murder of his uncle, Madoc applied to the warden of the marches for land which had been formerly promised him; and that officer, influenced by the resentment he had borne to Cadwgan and his family, granted his request; and what is still more singular, king Henry received

the ruffian into favour, upon his paying a fine.*

A series of retaliated injuries arise in regular succession ; evils naturally springing from the passions when they usurp the sword of justice. Meredydd, the only surviving son of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, caused an inroad to be made in the territory belonging to Llywarch apTrahaearn, who had been accessary to the murders lately committed on his brothers. Passing in the night through the land of Madoc ap Ririd, the retainers of Meredydd meeting a vassal in the service of that chieftain, inquired for his master ; the man at first affecting ignorance, was threatened with instant death ; he then gave them intelligence that his chief was in a place at no great distance. Early in the morning, the party surrounded Madoc, slew many of his followers, and brought him prisoner to

* Welsh Chron. p. 170, 171.

Meredydd ; who sent to his nephew Owen to decide his fate. That chieftain, reflecting that he himself had been, in various adventures, an associate of Madoc, and that they were united by oath in the bonds of friendship, determined not to put him to death ; though with a whimsical refinement in mercy, he satisfied his revenge by putting out his eyes.* Incidents like these, arising from the collission of contending parties, present, in sanguinary tints, a lively picture of barbarism.

A. D. 1112.

In the course of these events, Henry the king of England had an opportunity of giving to his territories in South Wales, an increase of security and strength, of the most beneficial and stable nature. In the reign of his father a great number of Flemings, having been driven out of their habitations by a very uncommon inundation, had come over into

A. D. 1112. 12th of Henry I.

* Welsh Chron. p. 172.

England. That king had entertained them with much cordiality, from just notions of policy; to increase, by such a number of useful inhabitants, the riches and strength of his kingdom. Many of these people, having been dispersed in different parts of his dominions, began by their numbers to create some uneasiness; which Henry removed by settling them as a colony in South Wales; where he gave them the country adjoining to Tenby and Haverfordwest, in which their posterity remain to this day.*

The king of North Wales, for some time past, had never done homage, nor had paid tribute to the crown of England. Having lately overcome his foreign enemies, Henry received complaints from the earl of Chester, that frequent devastations had been committed on his terri-

* Wm. Malmsbury, p. 158. Girald. Camb. Itin. lib. I. cap. XI. Verstegan, chap. IV. p. 100. Humfrey Lhuyd's Breviary, p. 58.

tories by Gryffydd ap Cynan, and by Gronw the son of Owen ap Edwyn the lord of Englefield. Similar complaints had been likewise made by the earl of Strigill, to whom Henry had lately given Caerdigan; that Owen the son of Cadwgan kept a number of retainers, who frequently plundered and infested his country.* On these complaints, Henry swore in his anger, that he would not leave a Welshman alive in North Wales, or in Powys; that he would exterminate the nation; and would settle in each country new inhabitants out of his own dominions. To execute this threat, he drew together, from different parts of his kingdom, a very considerable force; and Alexander the fierce, who then reigned in Scotland, served under him in person.

Three armies were formed; one of which, composed of a large body of Scots, and the power of the North, under the

* Welsh Chron. p. 173.

conduct of the Scottish king, and the earl of Chester, was designed for the conquest of North Wales; another, consisting of the strength of Cornwall, and a fourth part of England, led by the earl of Strigill, was ordered to invade those parts of South Wales which were still possessed by the natives; and a third, taking in the power of his military vassals in the middle part of his dominions, was commanded by the king of England himself, with which he proposed to subdue all Powys. Never was the Welsh nation, to all appearance, in such danger as at this period; the storm gathering from different quarters, seemed ready to burst, and to overwhelm it in ruin.

A. D. 1114. 14th of Henry I.

Intimidated at the prospect, Meredydd the son of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, delivered himself up to the mercy of Henry; and his nephew Owen the son of Cadwgan fled to Gryffydd ap Cynan. The king, on this turn in affairs, changing his first design, and directing all his force against

North Wales, advanced himself to Murcastell; and the king of Scots, in concert with him, penetrated as far as Pennant Bachwy. The inhabitants, as usual, retired to the mountains; and by the prudent orders of their king, having carried away their cattle and provisions, such a large army could not pursue them for want of subsistence, as well as from the natural difficulties of the country; and the English parties who attempted to do it, were attacked by the Welsh in the defiles of the mountains, and were either cut to pieces, or repulsed with great loss.*

Unable to penetrate the country, with safety to his troops, or with credit to his arms, Henry had recourse to the arts of negotiation. The king of Scotland was made the first instrument in carrying on the design. He proposed to Gryffydd ap Cynan, that if he would appear and

* Welsh Chron. p. 173.

yield himself up, he should be taken into Henry's favour. But the Welsh king, aware of the delusive nature of such a promise, refused to lay down his arms. On the failure of this negotiation, the earl of Chester was then sent to Gryffydd ap Cynan, to procure, if possible his submission to king Henry; and in order more effectually to promote the design, he insinuated that Owen ap Cadwgan had already made his peace with the English monarch. Incensed at the supposed perfidy of his confederate, the king of North Wales agreed to lay down his arms; for they had taken an oath, that neither party should conclude a peace, or make submission to the English prince, without the consent of the other. He also agreed to pay a large sum of money to king Henry, as a compensation, perhaps, for the ravages which had been lately committed in Cheshire. At the same time, Meredydd, under the pretence of treachery in the king of North Wales, brought over Owen his nephew. The

means of intercourse having been prevented by Meredydd, the two Welsh princes became the dupes of this artifice; and each of them made a separate peace with the king of England.* It gives us a striking idea of the valour of the Welsh, and of the exceeding difficulty of subduing their country by force, to see a prince, so potent as Henry the first, glossing over by a dishonourable subterfuge, real disgrace and disappointment. For where was the advantage resulting from the war? No homage or tribute appears to have been acknowledged or paid, nor any new territory obtained; no extermination of the inhabitants, as he proudly menaced; no new colonies established in North Wales, or in Powys.

The busy theatre of South Wales presents, at this period, a new and interesting character. Gryffydd the son of Rhys ap Tewdwr, who, on the death of his father, had been conveyed for safety into

* Welsh Chron. p. 174.

Ireland, remained in that country until he was twenty-five years of age. Desirous, then, of recovering the dignity which his ancestors had possessed, he came privately into South Wales, under the pretence of visiting Nêst his sister; who some time before had been concubine to king Henry, and had borne two sons to that monarch.* After her connexion with Henry had ceased, Gerald de Windsor, a gentleman of much estimation for his valour and conduct, then governor of Pembroke castle, obtained her in marriage; and, on that account, was appointed lieutenant over a part of that province. This lady was the same person, whose beauty had so lately excited Owen the son of Cadwgan to the act of violence already mentioned. With his sister, and his other kinsmen, Gryffydd remained two years. But Henry's jealousy did not allow this prince to continue long unmolested. For suspicions

* Giraldus Cambrensis, Itin. cap. XII. says one son. Brady's Hist. Engl. reign of Henry I p. 171, says two sons.

arising that he began to carry on intrigues with the Welsh, who regarded him as the restorer of their ancient freedom, and that his secret design was to recover his kingdom, orders were sent to have him arrested. When Gryffydd ap Rhys had intelligence of this design, he implored the protection of the king of North Wales; who assured him, that for the friendship he had born to his father, he should be cordially received, and should remain in perfect security within his dominions.* At the same time, Howel, the brother of the young prince, having been long a prisoner, made his escape out of the castle of Montgomery; and though sorely maimed, fled, as to a friendly asylum, to the court of Gryffydd ap Cynan.†

Henry, having heard of these events. A. D. 1115.
and dreading the effects if drawn into precedent, of the protection which had been yielded to Gryffydd ap Rhys ‡ in

* Welsh Chron. p. 173. † Ibid. ‡ Or *Hero*.

North Wales, sent a letter to Gryffydd ap Cynan; expressing in terms of courtesy and friendship, a desire of seeing him in England. Pleased with the flattering attention of so potent a monarch, he repaired to Henry's court; and was there received with honour and with much hospitality, with the addition also of presents in jewels, and other valuable effects to a considerable amount. Having thus given a reception to the Welsh king, which might flatter his vanity, or gratify his avarice, Henry, one day, laid open his design; representing to him the evils which might arise from giving protection to the son of Rhys ap Tewdwr, whose ambition was likely to disturb the peace of all Wales; and offering, at the same time, the most splendid rewards, if he would send either the person or the head of the young prince into England.* A mind less savage than that of a barbarian must feel some reluctance, before it could

* Welsh Chron. p. 176.

resolve to give up as a victim to the cruel and interested policy of Henry, an orphan prince who had sought his protection. But the sacred obligations of honour and of justice, the ties of friendship and the feelings of humanity, with every idea of prudence and patriotism, were, on this occasion, annihilated.

The friends of Gryffydd ap Rhys, suspecting some evil from the late singular proceedings, advised him and his brother Howel to withdraw themselves; that they might have an opportunity of observing the conduct of Gryffydd ap Cynan upon his return into Wales. On the arrival of that prince at his palace of Aberffraw, he enquired for Gryffydd ap Rhys; but was informed that he had retired from the court. Discovering the place of his retreat, the king sent out a body of horsemen to take him prisoner, and to conduct him back; but fortunately the young prince had notice of the design, though he had scarcely time to take sanctuary in the church of Aberdaron; a privileged

place in the present county of Caernarvon.* The king of North Wales having violated more sacred laws, had no scruple to infringe the privileges of sanctuary; and commanded Gryffydd ap Rhys to be taken out of his asylum by force. In this unpopular attempt his authority had no weight; for the clergy of that country, eager to defend their immunities, so effectually resisted the endeavours of his soldiers, that they were not able to execute his orders. In the night, the partisans of the young prince secretly conveyed him to Strath Towi, a deep forest in South Wales; where having collected the adherents of his family, he meditated hostilities against the Normans and Flemings.†

The first enterprise of Gryffydd ap
A. D. 1116. Rhys, was to destroy several castles belonging to the English. But, his forces increasing, he extended his ravages into Pembroke; and even menaced with a siege the castle of Caermarthen, which

* Welsh Chron. p. 176. † Ibid.

Henry had made the principal seat of government. The Norman officers, who had the charge of this fortress, judging that their own strength was insufficient to maintain the place, sent for the Welsh chieftains who were vassals to Henry; and, requiring each of them to defend it by turns for fourteen days, committed the castle to their custody. Owen the son of Caradoc, whose mother was daughter to Bleddyn ap Cynvyn, was the first to undertake its defence. Gryffydd ap Rhys, having sent spies to reconnoitre the situation of the place, suddenly invested it, being told that the works were assailable. A shout which his troops set up as they advanced to the assault, gave Owen notice of his danger; upon which, that chieftain, depending upon the support of his garrison, rushed forward to oppose the enemy; but being deserted by his soldiers, he was slain in the action, valiantly fighting upon the ramparts. The town was taken and demolished; the castle was only

dismantled. The young prince, then, retreated with considerable booty to his post in the forest of Strath Towi; from whence he frequently issued, with the fierceness of a tiger, and ravaged the country around.

The spoils his followers had lately obtained, and the fame which he himself had acquired, drew to his standard great numbers of men, whose age and spirit were congenial with his own; and who, admiring his activity and courage, were in full confidence that he would soon recover his father's dominions. Thus reinforced, Gryffydd lost no time in pursuing his success, and soon made himself master of two fortresses more belonging to the English; one of which was the castle of Gower, and the other the property of William de Londres. After this enterprise, he again retired to his strong situation with the cattle and plunder he had taken.

These successes had considerably raised the reputation of Gryffydd ap Rhys; and in consequence of which, the chieftains of Caerdigan espoused his cause, and submitted to his government; looking up to him as the guardian of his country, and calling on him to free them from the odious and ignominious tyranny of foreigners. Much pleased with the invitation which these chieftains had sent him, he entered their territories, and was received by them with much cordiality and honour.* The prosperity of his arms was equal to the rapidity of his movements. He suddenly came to Caerdigan Iscoed, and laid siege to a fortress, which the earl of Strigill had erected at Blaen Porth Gwithan in that neighbourhood; and after a severe contest and sustaining many terrible assaults, though with the loss only of one of his own soldiers, the place was at length taken and burned to the ground. As far as Penwedic the same devastation attended

* Welsh Chron. p. 178.

the deserted houses of the English inhabitants; who, struck with dismay, had fled from the fury of the Welsh. He then laid siege to a fortress called Strath-Peithyll in Caerdigan, belonging to the steward of the earl of Strigill; which he took by assault, and put the garrison to the sword. Advancing to Glasgrig, he there encamped to give his forces a day's rest. Near this place was the church of Llanbadarn, one of those sanctuaries which possessed very high privileges; and in which the cattle, feeding within certain precincts, were regarded as sacred.* Out of this asylum he ventured to take some cattle to refresh his army; an impolitic, though it might be a necessary measure; as it was likely to injure his reputation with his countrymen, by wounding their religious feelings. He then proposed on the following day to lay siege to the castle of Aberystwyth. The governor, acquainted with the design, sent to Strath-Meyric,† a neighbouring fortress,

* Welsh Chron. p. 179. † *Ystrad Meirig.*

for a reinforcement; which during the night was safely conveyed into the castle.* Ignorant of this, Gryffydd ap Rhys preserved no order among his troops, and confident of success, appeared before the place; but being drawn into an ambuscade laid for him by the governor, his forces were defeated with much slaughter, and he himself compelled to quit that province.† He, however continued some time longer to maintain himself in the forest of Strath-Towi.‡ The conduct of this prince, which brightened his early life, promised to open with still greater lustre; but the disaster he had lately experienced, or, perhaps, a diminished reputation, seems to have given a check to his career, and to have cooled the ardour of his enterprising spirit. A. D. 1116.

Unable to subdue this prince by open hostilities, Henry had recourse to mea-

* Welsh Chron. p. 179. † Ibid. p. 180.

‡ Lord Littleton's Life of Henry II. vol. II. p. 61.

sures, wicked in their principles, and marking a mean and narrow policy. He sent orders to Owen the son of Cadwgan, one of the late princes of Powys to repair to the English court. On his arrival, the king expressed much confidence in his fidelity; and desired him, on strong assurances of recompence, to assassinate Gryffydd apRhys, or to take him prisoner. That chieftain, whose savage manners rendered him suitable for such an employment, gladly accepted the commission. Returning into Wales, he engaged in the same odious design Llywarch ap Trahaearn, a chieftain of that country; and with their joint forces they marched towards the forest of Strath-Towi, to form a junction with Robert earl of Gloucester, the natural son of Henry by Nêst his late concubine; whom the king his father had sent to give vigour to an enterprise, the design of which was the murder of his uncle. The ruffians being arrived on the confines of the forest, they bound themselves in a solemn

engagement, not to suffer man, woman, or child, who inhabited that district, to escape alive out of their hands. The people of that country, hearing of this savage resolution, left their habitations, to hide themselves in caves and amidst rocks and woods; while others sought refuge even in the castles belonging to the Normans.

In order to facilitate their entrance into the forest, the approaches being narrow and difficult, the chiefs divided their force into separate parties. Owen himself at the head of about a hundred soldiers, entered the woods; and in his way, perceiving the footsteps of men, he pursued and overtook them, killed some of their number, and dispersed the remainder; then, seizing on their cattle, he returned with his plunder towards the main body of the army. At this moment, Gerald the governor of Pembroke castle, made his appearance, intending to join the king's forces. Meeting the

people who had fled from Owen, they complained of the injury they had just received, and implored his assistance. In an instant the idea of revenge rushed upon his mind, for the insult which his honour had received some years before, by the outrage which Owen had committed on his wife. He instantly entered the forest in pursuit of that chieftain, who being warned by his followers of the approaching danger, refused to fly; confident that his pursuers intended him no injury, they, like himself, being vassals of the king of England. As soon as Gerald and his forces drew near, they discharged a volley of arrows. Owen, then, finding his mistake, with much spirit, called upon his men to support him; telling them, that though their enemies were seven to one in number, they were only Flemings, affrighted at the name of a Welshman, and were only distinguished by drinking deep at carousals. In the first onset Owen ap Cadwgan was slain; an arrow having pierced his

heart. His death dispirited his followers, who fled to the main body of the army; and the tidings of this outrage, having given the confederates a distrust of the king's forces, they dispersed, and returned into their respective countries.* In this manner died, suitably to the tenor of his life, this bold and profligate chieftain.

The princes of the House of Powys revolted, at this time, from their allegiance to Henry, and making inroads upon the English marches, committed there great depredations.

The English monarch, incensed at their revolt, once more marched in person at the head of a powerful army into Wales.† When he arrived on the con- A. D. 1121. 21st of Henry I

* Welsh Chron. p. 182.

† Simon Dunelme, p. 245. Holinshead's Chron. p. 42. Roger Hovedon, p. 477. John Brompton, p. 1013. These writers say, that in this expedition, the king penetrated as far as Snowdun.

fines of Powys, Meredydd ap Bleddyn, and his nephews, the three sons of the late prince Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, implored the assistance of Gryffydd the king of North Wales. But this prince, estranged from the real interests of his country, and still deluded by the artifice of Henry, refused to afford them any succour, or to allow them the liberty of entering into any part of his dominions; he being then, as he told them, at peace with that monarch.

The Welsh princes, despairing of any other relief, than what they might derive from their own spirit and exertions, prepared for their defence; and with much judgment stationed bodies of men to guard the different passes into the country. The English king, having ordered his army to take a larger circuit, that the conveyance of his carriages might be rendered more easy, entered himself with a few troops into a narrow defile. The Welsh, stationed in places of advantage,

began to skirmish with their arrows; killing some, and wounding many of his party. An arrow accidentally shot from an unknown hand, struck the king on the breast: he received little or no injury from the blow, the force of it being broken by the excellent temper of his *habergeon*, or coat of mail.* It was uncertain from whence the stroke proceeded; but Henry, the instant he felt it, swore by the "death of our Lord," his usual oath, that the arrow came not from a Welsh, but an English bow.† The danger he had so narrowly escaped made him desirous of ending the war; in which a single misfortune, in so wild a country, might sully the renown he had formerly acquired. There was something fastidious in the idea, that the glory of Henry would be tarnished, by any check his arms might receive from the Welsh; a people, who, though rude, and deriving

* Stowe's Chron. p. 140. Welsh Chron. p. 185.

† William Malmsbury, p. 158. Franckfort edit Baker's Chron. p. 40.

little splendor from alliances, or the extent or situation of their country, had hitherto baffled the various attempts, which a powerful nation like the English, had made against their liberties.

The king, in this situation, and under the sense of alarm, entered into a negociation with Meredydd the prince of Powys, ; who submitted to give hostages, to pay a thousand head of cattle, and a small sum of money as a compensation for the treason committed in this insurrection by himself, and by his nephews. On these terms, Henry very willingly granted them pardon and peace; and
A. D. 1122. returned into England, having appointed the lord Fitzwarren to be warden of the marches. *

A. D. 1125. 1127. A spirit of cruelty, which bordered upon frenzy, and which broke asunder the ties of nature, seized on the different

* Welsh Chron. p. 185, 186, 187. William Malmsbury, p. 159.

branches of the house of Powys; an effect produced by the custom of *gavel-kind*, that fatal source from which the Welsh have tasted so deeply of the waters of bitterness.*

It seems, at this time, as if Gryffydd ap Rhys had lain down his arms, and had been taken into favour by the English king; having received from that prince a district of land, on which for a while he remained in quiet. Though given for the support of his family, or to secure his fidelity, this estate was, however taken from him by Henry, on a fictitious charge brought against him by the Normans, near whom he resided.† There was something singular and cruel, in thus driving a prince into want, dependance and despair in the very country of which he himself was the natural sovereign. A. D. 1127. 27th of Henry I

Meredydd prince of Powys, the last surviving son of Bleddpn ap Cynvyn, died at this time; who, forsaking the interests of A. D. 1133.

* Welsh Chron. p. 186, 187, 188. † Ibid. p. 187.

his native country, had long become a subject to the king of England.‡

A. D. 1135. Soon after this event died also Henry the first, and Stephen succeeded to the English crown.

The news of Henry's death, arriving in Wales, excited a general commotion: a a spirit of revolt and hostility was instantly diffused. Even Gryffydd ap Cynan, who so long had deserted the dignity of his character, deluded by artifice, or influenced by a personal regard for the late king, joined in the common cause against the English. The insurrection began in the territory of Pembroke, and a considerable body of Normans were cut in pieces. Animated with success, the insurgents spread over and ravaged the whole of that country; putting to death all the foreigners wherever they came.†

* Welsh Chron. p. 188.

† Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. 1. p. 63. taken from Gest. Reg. Step. p. 930, 931, 932. & Continuat. ad Flor. Wig. sub annos, 1135, 1136, 1137.

To pursue the revolt with greater ability and vigour, Gryffydd ap Rhys found it necessary to go into North Wales, to procure a reinforcement of troops from his father-in-law, Gryffydd ap Cynan. In the absence of that prince, his wife Gwenllian, desirous of aiding the generous design of her husband, took the field in person at the head of her own forces, attended by her two sons. This lady's success was not equal to her gallant spirit. Her army was defeated not far from the castle of Cydweli, by Maurice de Londres, an English earl possessed of great property in the country. Morgan, one of her sons was slain in the action, and her other son Maelgwyn taken prisoner; and the princess herself, it is said, was beheaded by the orders of her brutal enemy.* An action so savage, without precedent even in these times, called loudly for vengeance on the spirit of the injured princes.*

* Girald. Cambr. Itin. lib. I. cap. IV.

† Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. lib 1. cap. IX. and also Dr. Powel's notes on the said chapter. This

Alive to an injury so singular and atrocious, her brothers Owen Gwynedd and Cadwalader, laid waste, with infinite fury, the province of Caerdigan.* Among a people, whose manners seem to have been little refined by ideas of chivalry, we are surprised at the appearance of characters, whose personal qualities, and bravery of spirit, whose courteous and gentle demeanour, might have entitled them to dispute the palm with the accomplished knights of feudal ages.† These distinguished persons were the sons of Gryffydd ap Cynan. As soon as these princes arrived in South Wales, several chieftains joined their army; and being thus reinforced, they took and destroyed

A. D. 1135. 1st of Stephen

circumstance clearly contradicts the assertion of Florentius Monk of Westminster, that Gwenllian wife to Gryffydd ap Rhys, by deceitful practicies, had been the cause of his death. See Welsh Chron. p. 190.

* Welsh Chr. p. 189. † Giral. Cam. lib. II. c. XII.

‡ The word *Aber*, which freqaently occurs in the Welsh history, signifies that point where a lesser river runs into a larger; or where a river discharges itself into the sea.

the castles of Aberystwyth,‡ Dinerth, and Caerwedros, and two other fortresses belonging to Walter Aspec, and Richard de la Mare; all of which were strong and well garrisoned, Having finished the campaign, so much to the honour of their feelings, the princes returned into North Wales.*

In revenge, it is probable, of the late devastations, Ranulph earl of Chester made an inroad into Wales; but being on a sudden intercepted by the Welsh, it was with great difficulty that he himself, with five of his soldiers were able to escape; the remainder of his forces having been put to the sword.† A. D. 1136.

On the close of the same year, Owen and Cadwalader again invaded South Wales, at the head of a formidable force; consisting of six thousand infantry, and two thousand horse, all of which were

* Welsh Chron. p. 180.
† Simon Dunelme, Continuata, p. 258, 259.

compleatly armed. Gryffydd ap Rhys, who had married their sister, and was all on fire for vengeance, besides many eminent chieftains, joined the princes of North Wales; and strengthened their army by considerable supplies.* With a violence not to be resisted, the confederate princes subdued the whole country as far as the town of Caerdigan; expelling the foreigners, and reinstating the native inhabitants. To repel this formidable insurrection, the united force of the Normans, the Flemings, and the English, in Wales or in the marches, was exerted, under the conduct of several powerful barons, who determined by one great effort to recover the territories lately torn from them.† These were the two sons of Gerald de Windsor, with Robert Fitzmartyn, and William Fitz John, besides Stephen the governor of Caerdigan; who, after the death of Gerald, had married Nêst, the widow of that lord.

* Welsh Chron. p. 190. † Ibid. p. 189.

† Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. 1. p. 63.

The courage of the Welsh had, in various situations, been terrible to their enemies; on this occasion, it seems to have been raised above the usual standard; fired with resentment at the late outrage, and animated by the example of leaders, whose spirit and talents rendered them so fit for command. The English, after a severe and bloody conflict, were defeated, with the loss of three thousand men; and flying to their castles for safety, were so closely pursued, that many prisoners were taken, and great numbers were drowned in the Teifi; a bridge across that river having broken down, over which the fugitives were obliged to pass.* Never before had the English, in their various attempts upon Wales, received so terrible a blow. Having finished another prosperous campaign, the two young princes returned into North Wales; carrying with them, to grace their triumph, the horses and armour, and the rich spoils they had taken.†

* Welsh Chron. p. 189. Hist. Gwedir Family. p. 4. Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 364.

† Brit. Ant. Rev. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 22.

In the course of these events, Richard earl of Clare, to whom the territory of Caerdigan had been given by Henry, was murdered by Iorwerth, the brother of Morgan of Caer Lleon; as he was riding through a forest, enjoying the pleasure of music, and without suspicion of an enemy.* His widow, the countess of Clare, and sister to the earl of Chester, had retired into one of his castles, on the murder of her husband. In this fortress, during the late campaign, she was besieged by the Welsh. The situation of this lady was truly deplorable. She was invested by an irritated enemy, and in want of provisions; the English were nearly all slain, or expelled the country; her brother was at a distance, and so employed in defending his own territories, that he could not afford her any timely relief: and, what contributed to render her situation still more wretched, she had reason to expect every hour a fate, which she might deem not more cruel than death itself; the Welsh, like many other nations,

* Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. lib. I. cap. IV.

having usually taken their female captives, even those of the highest rank, to be their concubines.† In this dreadful state, Milo Fitz Waler, who, by right of his wife the daughter of Bernard de Newmarche, was the lord of Brecknock, re-received orders from king Stephen to use his utmost endeavours to set at liberty the unfortunate countess. There was so much difficulty and danger in the enterprise, that its success appeared almost impossible. A generous pity, which a brave mind ever feels for weakness in distress, and the gallant spirit of chivalry, made him however attempt, at every hazard, to deliver the lady out of danger. He lost no time, therefore, in marching, with a chosen body of troops, through ways which were least frequented; traversing along the tops of mountains and through the deep woods of the country; and at

* Lord Lyttleton's Life of Henry II. p. 64. Cadwalader, one of these princes, afterwards married the daughter of this countess of Clare. Hist. Gwedir, p. 5.

length, having had the good fortune to arrive at the castle, unseen by the Welsh, he carried away the countess of Clare, and all her retinue.* An action so gallant and humane, equals many of the fanciful descriptions which are found in romance, and proves such pictures to have borne some resemblance to the manners of the feudal ages.

We see not on this occasion, the same gallantry of spirit in Owen and Cadwalader; nor in other parts of their subsequent conduct; though these princes, it is said, were highly distinguished for humanity and courteous manners.†

A. D. 1137. The power of the confederacy against the English was much weakened by the death of Gryffydd the son of Rhys ap Tewdwr; who closing with his life a series of gallant actions, reflected back

* Lord Lyttleton's Henry II. vol. II. p. 64. from Girald. Cambrensis Itin. Cam. cap. II. lib. 1.

† Welsh Chron. p. 189.

the honours he had received from a long line of illustrious ancestry.*

The same fate, soon after the late prosperous campaign, attended Gryffydd ap Cynan king of North Wales; who died at the advanced age of eighty-two, A. D. 1137. and was buried on the south side of the 2nd of great alter in the church of Bangor.† Stephen This prince had three sons and five daughters by his wife Angharad the daughter of Owen ap Edwyn lord of Enlefield. The names of the three sons were Owen, Cadwalader, and Cadwallon; the youngest of whom was slain before the death of his father.‡ He had likewise five other children by another woman.§

In such a country as North Wales, where so many causes conspired to render its government unstable, and the enjoy-

* Welsh Chron. p. 190. † Vita Griff. fil. Cononi.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 191. Hist. Gwedir family, p. 1.

§ Welsh Chron. p. 191.

ment of it often fatal to the sovereign, that the late prince should have been able to extend his reign to fifty years, was an extraordinary instance of good fortune, and a proof of his possessing considerable abilities. The love of freedom, which had distinguished the early part of his life, infused the same spirit into the minds of his subjects; and which led them to disdain the ignominious yoke imposed on them by a foreign power. His valour, and his abilities, aiding their returning virtue, delivered his country from the vassalage of England; and, in general, by his conduct with Henry, or by the vigour of his government, he preserved his dominions free from the invasions of the English, and from civil commotions. The recital of these virtues, which form the shining features of his character, is no more than a just eulogium on his memory. But other impressions are marked on the reverse of the medal, expressive of a conduct neither amiable nor great. A just policy required him to unite in the common cause, as to

one central point, the jarring interests which prevailed in the other principalities; and the importance of his own situation and character, should have induced him to reflect, that he himself was the great spring, which was to give life and vigour, and efficacy to the exertions of the whole. He ought to have known that the conquest of Wales was a leading principle in the politics of England; and that the princes of that country would never cease to exert every effort of sagacity and power, until their ambition had been satiated by the conquest, or by the entire destruction of the Welsh. Impressed with ideas such as these, he ought to have regarded every offer of friendship, made by the English monarch, as a delusive snare to his honour: and at every gift, he ought to have exclaimed in the natural language of distrust, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.* Influenced by a personal regard to Henry, or by motives of a baser nature, he was led to prefer a selfish and solitary peace with the English, to the

more generous and manly conduct of sharing in the common danger; and of attempting to preserve the general freedom of his country, by uniting its strength. He was prevented, indeed, by his tedious captivity in Chester, from taking an active part, in impeding the conquests which the English were making in South Wales; nor is it candid to suppose, in that period of his life, he was insensible to the danger of that country, or could be cold to its interests. The same plea will not justify another part of his conduct. Instead of giving security to Powys, a barrier of such importance to his kingdom, he left the princes of that country, on its being invaded by Henry, to abide their fate; refusing under a cold pretence, to afford them protection or relief. These traits of his character, with a desire of sacrificing to the jealousy of the English king an orphan prince, who had sought his protection, and whose birth and talents might have rendered him the instrument of his country's safe-

ty, evince; that the conduct of Gryffydd ap Cynan was not entirely directed by the principles of honour, or humanity, or of a solid and extensive policy.

HISTORY

OF

WALES.

BOOK VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF GRYFFYDD AP CYNAN, TO THE ACCESSION OF LLEWELYN AP IORWERTH.

ON the death of Gryffydd ap Cynan, his dominions, agreeably to the custom of the country, were divided among his sons.
A. D. 1137. 2nd of Stephen His eldest son Owen, surnamed Gwynedd, under the newly adopted title of *prince*, succeeded as sovereign of North Wales.

This active prince, in confederacy with his brother, began his reign by a third expedition into South Wales, with the same fortunate issue which had heretofore

followed his arms; destroying in his progress the castles of Strath-Meyric, Stephen, and Humfrey, and burning to the ground the town of Caermarthen.* Retaining in his possession all Caerdigan, and obliging the inhabitants of Pembroke to pay him tribute, he returned into his own dominions in high reputation. †

The series of prosperity which of late had attended the Welsh princes, might in some measure be owing to the embarrassed situation of Stephen king of England. This prince, engaged in continual hostilities, and in supporting a doubtful title, had neither inclination nor leisure to interest himself in affairs, in which he himself had no immediate concern; and were transacted too in so remote a part of the island. In consequence of which, he concluded a peace with the Welsh, and allowed them to retain the territories they had lately recovered free of homage

* Welsh Chron. p. 193.

† Brit. Ant. Rev. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 23.

or tribute; at least, it does not appear that either the one or the other was ever paid, during his reign, by any of the princes of Wales.*

An incident arose at this time, affording an example of savage manners; which proved fatal to the parties concerned, and, in the event, had nearly involved the state in ruin. Anarawd, the son of Gryffydd ap Rhys, had married the daughter of Cadwalader, the brother of Owen prince of North Wales. A violent dispute having arisen between the father and the son, they decided the contest by a single combat. In this rencounter An-
A. D. arawd was slain. Owen was so incensed
1142. at this outrage committed by his brother, that he, with his son Howel, invaded the territories of that prince; set on fire his castle of Aberystwyth, laid waste the country, and obliged him to fly into Ireland. Engaging in his service several Irish chieftains, and a large body of

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. of Henry II. vol. II. p. 66.

forces, Cadwalader landed at Abermenai in Caermarthenshire; where he was opposed by the prince of North Wales with a powerful army; but before any action had taken place, a peace was concluded between the two brothers; which so incensed the Irish, that they detained Cadwalader, as a security, until they had received their stipulated pay. That prince, to recover his liberty, gave them two thousand head of cattle. As soon as the prince of North Wales had heard that his brother was at liberty, he suddenly attacked the Irish; slew great numbers of them, and recovered the cattle which had been given by Cadwalader, with the prisoners and other spoils they had taken in the country.* A. D. 1142.

After this expedition, Howel † and Cynan, the illegitimate sons of Owen

* Welsh Chron. p. 197.

† Besides being a gallant warrior, prince Howel was a Bard ef some eminence; several poems of his being now extant.

Gwynedd, made another inroad into South Wales; gave the Normans, who opposed them, an overthrow, and took possession of the town of * Caerdigan. † This was succeeded by an attempt which was made by Gilbert earl of Clare; to recover those territories which, it is probable, Stephen in the late treaty had ceded to the Welsh. With this view he came with a large army into Pembroke, and rebuilt the castle of Caermarthen, and another fortress. ‡ To defeat his design, Cadell the son of the late Gryffydd ap Rhys, laid siege to, and made himself master of the castle of Dinevawr. Joining then his forces with those of his brothers Meredydd and Rhys, they invested the castle of Caermarthen; which was soon given up on condition that the lives of the garrison should be spared.§ This advantage encouraged them to appear before the castle of Llanstephan,|| in

* Welsh Chron. p. 198. † *Aberteifi.*

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 198. § Ibid.

|| Situated near the mouth of the river *Towi.*

the county of Caermarthen ; to the relief of which came a large body of the enemy ; but success still attending on the arms of the Welsh, the Normans were defeated and the fortress was taken. The Normans and Flemings who inhabited that country, under the conduct of the sons of Gerald, and of William de Hay, in hopes of recovering the castle, suddenly invested it. Meredydd the son of Gryffydd ap Rhys, to whose custody the fortress was committed, defended it with great valour, and with equal ability ; for having suffered the enemy to scale the walls, and at the moment, when the ladders were crowded with soldiers, he caused them to be overturned by the means of engines he had previously provided. This discomfiture, with the loss they had sustained, obliged the Normans to raise the siege. * A. D. 1143. 8th of Stephen

An affliction of a private nature, the sudden death of Rhun, † a favourite

* Welsh Chron. p. 198. † Ibid. p. 226.

though an illegitimate son, fell at this time upon Owen prince of North Wales. In the bitterness of his sorrow, the afflicted father gave himself up to solitude and to tears. But the desire of assisting the operations so successfully begun in South Wales, as well as the importance of the object, reviving the spirit of an active and a gallant prince, he determined to lay siege to the castle of Mold, in Flintshire. That fortress, situated on the Welsh frontier, was exceedingly strong, and had within it a numerous garrison of English; who frequently sallying out, much infested the adjacent country. It had been frequently besieged by the Welsh; but on account of its strength and warlike appointments, every attempt had hitherto proved unsuccessful. The place was at this time invested by Owen, and the garrison with great intrepidity sustained many terrible assaults; at length, the Welsh, animated by the presence of their sovereign, bore down every resistance, and entered the castle by storm. Having taken prisoners those

A. D. 1144.

who had escaped the sword, prince Owen levelled with the ground the walls of that fortress. In doing which he gave no proof of his military sagacity; such a place being evidently of importance, as a check to the inroads of the English on the frontier of his dominions. The glory of this atchievement so elevated the spirits of the Welsh prince, that he soon forgot his sorrows; and recovered the usual tone of his mind, as well as a relish for his former amusements.*

The sons of Gryffydd ap Rhys having laid siege to the castle of Gwys in Pembrokeshire, and finding their own force unequal to the enterprize, they desired A. D. the assistance of Howel, the natural son 1145. of Owen Gwynedd; whose talents for the council or the field were high in the esteem of his country. This young prince, eager for glory, joined the three Welsh lords; and having reconnoitred the fortress, he caused engines to be constructed to batter its walls, and to annoy the

* Welsh Chron. p. 199.

soldiers by throwing large stones into the castle. Preparations so formidable, and probably so novel, intimidated the garrison, who instantly surrendered the fort. After this exploit, Howel returned into his own country.*

A dissension having arisen between Howel and Cynan, the sons of the prince of North Wales, and Cadwalader their uncle, the young princes led a body of troops into Meirionydd, to ravage his territories. The terror of this inroad caused the inhabitants to fly into different places of sanctuary. But the princes having proclaimed, that no injury was intended to any person who submitted to their authority, the people, accustomed to a change of masters, quietly returned to their own habitations. They then invested the castle of Cynvael, erected by Cadwalader, and left by that prince to the custody of the Abbot of Ty Gwyn.† Neither menaces, nor offers of rewards,

* Welsh Chron. p. 200.

† Whitland Abbey, in Caermarthenshire.

could shake the fidelity of this warlike priest; he defended the place with great intrepidity, until the walls of the castle were beaten down, and all the garrison were either wounded or slain; he then made his eseape by means of some friends which he had in the enemies' army.* Some time after another of his fortresses was taken by his nephew Howel, his territory wrested from him, and Cadwalader himself imprisoned.† A. D. 1148.

Animosity against the English, and the same gallantry of spirit which had distinguished the father, animated the sons of Gryffydd ap Rhys. Cadell, one of the sons of that prince, having fortified the castle of Caermarthen, issued from thence with a body of troops, and marched to Cydweli, the country about which he ravaged and laid waste; then, joining his forces with those of his brothers Meredydd and Rhys, they entered into Caerdigan,

* Welsh Chron. p. 201.

† Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 168.

Caerdigan, and subdued a part of that district.*

The incidents of this reign have been hitherto confined to enterprizes of no national importance. But a transaction arose at this time, which in some measure menaced the safety of the state, and called into exercise the military talents of the prince of North Wales. To recover the credit of his arms, which had been lost by a former defeat in Wales, Ranulph earl of Chester meditated a formidable invasion of that country. † Besides his own vassals, he collected from different parts of England a large body of troops. He engaged likewise in the design Madoc ap Meredydd, at this time the Prince of Powys, who disdaining to hold his territories under the sovereignty of North Wales, joined the arms of the earl of Chester; and the two leaders, with their united forces, entered the dominions of Owen Gwynedd. On this

* Welsh Chron. p. 202. † Ibid. p. 197.

invasion, that prince advanced into Flintshire, to give his enemies the meeting at Counsyllt, on the confines of his kingdom. This movement, as rapid as it was bold, infused a spirit into his army, and secured his own territories from the devastations of war. Contrary to the usual custom of the Welsh, of scarcely ever risking a general engagement, or of attacking an enemy unless in situations of advantage. Owen, availing himself of the ardour of his troops, faced the English and offered them battle; though their forces were superior to his own own in numbers, and had also the advantage from the nature of their arms. The fortune of the day decided in favour of the Welsh; who so entirely discomfited the English, that few remained to witness their disgrace; except those who were taken prisoners, and the leaders of the army, who escaped the fury of the pursuit by the swiftness of their horses.* A. D. 1150. 15th of Stephen

* Welsh Chron. p. 202. Hist. Gwedir Family. p. 4.

Though urged to a different conduct, by every motive of prudence, Cadell, Meredydd, and Rhys, the sons of Gryffydd ap Rhys, invaded Caerdigan, which was the property of Howel the son of the prince of North Wales; and subdued the whole of that territory, except a single fortress in Pengwern. The loss of the bravest of their soldiers, which they sustained at the siege of Llanrystyd castle, so irritated the young princes, that when they gained possession of it, they put the garrison to the sword. From thence they proceeded to the castle of Strath-Meyric; which, after they had taken, they fortified with new works; and the princes, then, disbanding their forces, returned into South Wales.*

A. D. 1150. 15th of Stephen

A. D. 1150.

Cadell, the eldest of these lords, being fond of the pleasures of the chase, engaged in a hunting party to amuse himself after the toils of the late expedition. This

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 170.

prince had no sooner begun his diversion, than the inhabitants of Tenby, who had conceived some displeasure against him, suddenly attacked his party; and, unarmed as they were, easily put them to flight. Cadell himself, sorely wounded, escaped with difficulty to his house, where he languished a considerable time. In revenge of this treatment, his brothers Meredydd and Rhys, entered the territory of Gower in Glamorgan; and having laid waste that country, they made themselves masters of the castles of Aberllychwr, which they levelled with the ground; they then returned into their own territories, enriched with much plunder, and rebuilt the castle of Dinevawr, the ancient palace of their ancestors. Some time after, the two princes laid siege to the castle of Penwedic in Caerdigan, belonging to prince Howel, of which, after some difficulty, they gained possession; then investing the castle of Tenby in the night, they took that fortress by escalade, before the garrison was aware of any danger;

obtaining revenge, by this last exploit, for the injury which their brother had lately received. *

The custom of Asiatic sovereigns, of exterminating the younger branches of their family, was too frequently adopted by the Welsh princes; tinging more deeply their native barbarism, by a policy so mean and sanguinary. Cadwallon the brother of Owen Gwynedd prince of North Wales, having been assasinated, in the late reign, in revenge of several murders which he himself had committed, left a son of the name of Cynetha, the undoubted heir to his territories. To render his nephew incapable of supporting the claim which he had to his paternal inheritance, Owen had the barbarity to pull out his eyes; and refining on a savage and a detested policy, he also caused him to be castrated; that no heirs in future
A. D. 1151. might lay claim to his territories, or might retaliate the injuries which this

* Welsh Chron. p. 203.

prince had received.* An action so atrocious, and not to be extenuated even by the rudeness of these times, throws a deep shade over the character of a prince, who, in many respects, was a friend to his country, and of an amiable and gallant spirit.

Cadwalader, who had been long kept in confinement by his nephew Howel, had the good fortune to escape out of prison; and flying into Anglesey, he brought a great part of that island under his subjection. The prince of North Wales, hearing of his brother's escape, and of the prosperous situation of his affairs, sent against him a body of troops; which proving too formidable to be resisted by Cadwalader, he was obliged to fly into England, to solicit assistance from the relations of his wife, a daughter of the house of Clare.†

A. D. 1151. 16th of Stephen

* Welsh Chron. p. 203. † Memoirs of Gwedir Family, p. 5. Welsh Chron. p. 203. At this time (A. D. 1153.) died Meredydd the son of the late prince Gryffydd ap Rhys of South Wales.

The late event was followed by another of much greater importance to Wales, by the death of Stephen the king of England; and Henry the second, a more formidable
A. D. 1154. enemy to its interests, succeeded to the throne.*

While the Welsh princes were wasting the national force in mutual hostilities, the Flemings, who had settled as a colony in South Wales, acquired an accession of
A. D. 1155. 1st of Henry II. strength. One of the first acts in the government of king Henry, relating to Wales, was to banish out of England the Flemish soldiers, who had followed the fortunes of Stephen; and, possessing sound principles of political wisdom, he gave permission to these foreigners, to settle among their countrymen in the province of Pembroke.†

Several causes conspired, with the motives of ambition and glory, in engaging the king of England, to employ at this

* Welsh Chron. p. 204. † Ibid. p. 205

time, the utmost exertion of his power, in attempting the conquest of Wales. Madoc ap Meredydd, the prince of Powys, conscious of having joined the enemies of his country; and dreading the resentment which that conduct had excited in the breast of Owen Gwynedd, endeavoured, as a means of his future security, to incite the English king to the invasion of North Wales. Cadwalader, likewise, since the fatal issue of the combat with his nephew, having been treated with severity by his brother Owen, and by the sons of that prince, had fled into England; and in that court, had employed in prosecution of the same design, his own solicitations, with the powerful influence of the house of Clare.* The glory to be acquired, and the importance of the object, with the apparent facility of the enterprise, from the defection of such powerful princes, determined Henry to exert every means,

* Welsh Chron. p. 206.

which his great power afforded, for the conquest of the country.

A. D. 1157. 3rd of Henry II. He collected out of different parts of England, a very formidable army, with which he marched to Chester; then advancing into Flintshire, he encamped his forces upon a marsh called Saltney, which borders upon the river Dee. Such was the mighty preparations which this prince had made for the conquest of Wales, that he compelled every two of his military vassals throughout England, to find a soldier to reinforce his army, and enable him with greater vigour to prosecute the war. Owen, the prince of North Wales, with his usual activity, advancing to the frontiers of his dominions, took post at Basingwerk near Holywell in the county

* Math. Paris, p. 81. There were sixty thousand knights' fees created by the Conqueror, which must make the levy of Henry, raised at this time, to amount to 30,000 men. Hume's Hist. Eng. vol. II. p. 2. Appendix, p. 141.

of Flint. In this situation he waited the approach of the English. The boldness of the movement encouraged Henry to hope, that the Welsh prince intended to risk a general engagement. And in consequence of which, he dispached a chosen body of troops under the command of several barons of distinction; with the design of bringing the Welsh into an action, or of dislodging them from their post. This party, in passing through the woody and broken country of Coed Eulo, near Hawarden, was attacked by David and Cynan the sons of Owen Gwynedd; and who, with a body of forces, had lain in ambush to intercept them. The suddenness and impetuosity of the assault, with the unusual difficulties of their situation, so intimidated the English, that they fled in great disorder, and with much slaughter to the main body of the army.* Alarmed at the danger, and mortified by the disgrace, the king of England broke up his camp, and marched along the sea

* Welsh Chron. p. 206.

shore to the town of Flint; intending by this manœuvre, to deceive the Welsh prince by leaving him upon the right, and by a nearer road to penetrate into the interior parts of the country. But in passing through a long and narrow defile at Counsyllt, he was intercepted by Owen.

The design was conducted with temper and judgment. The English were permitted to enter unmolested so far into the strait, as to render their advance or retreat both difficult and dangerous. The Welsh, then, rushing with terrible outcries from out of the woods, assaulted them with stones, arrows, and other missile weapons. Struck with dismay, encumbered with heavy armour, and unaccustomed to fight in such situations, the English were again thrown into the utmost disorder; being unable either to retreat, or to resist so unexpected an onset.* In the general confusion, Henry

* Welsh Chron. p. 207. Holinshed's Chron. p. 67. Giraldus Cambrensis, Itin. cap. X, lib. II.

himself was obliged to fly; Eustace Fitz John, and Robert de Courcy, with other noblemen of distinction, were slain.*

The few of the vanguard who had escaped the sword, fell back upon the main body of the English, who were advancing in regular order to the entrance of the defile. A rumour instantly prevailed of the death of the king; and the earl of Essex, * hereditary standard-bearer of England, seized with the general terror, threw to the ground the royal standard; at the same time crying aloud, "The king is slain." The the terror then became universal. ‡ The Welsh, perceiving

* Stowe's Chron. p. 149.

† The year following, Essex was accused of treason by Robert de Montford; and being vanquished by him in a single combat, which happened in consequence, he was condemned to death by king Henry; though the severity of the sentence was afterwards mitigated by that prince; his estate, however, was confiscated, and after being shorn like a monk, he was confined during his life in a convent. Lord Lyttleton's Hist. of Henry II.

‡ Holinshead's Chron. p. 67. Chronica Gervasii, p. 1380.

their disorder, attacked the English with such impetuosity, that a general rout must have ensued; if at this moment the king, at length extricated from his perilous situation, had not made himself known to the army, by lifting up the vizor of his helmet. His presence in an instance changed the scene. The English acquiring fresh ardour from the gallantry of their sovereign, and who with alacrity led them on to the charge, gave a check to the Welsh forces, and drove them back into the woods.*

The prince of Wales, after this slight disaster, retired to a post near St. Asaph, called from this event *Cil Owen*, or Owen's retreat. On the nearer approach of the king, he retreated to Bryn-y-Pin, a stronger post situated five miles west of St. Asaph.† At the same time, by the orders of Henry, an English fleet, which

* Holinshed's Chron. p. 67.

† Stowe's Chron. p. 149. A manuscript copy in Welsh of Caradoc of Llancarvan.

he had assembled at Chester, infested the coast of North Wales. The king of England meeting with no resistance, advanced to Rhuddlan, where he erected a house for the knights templars; * a new kind of military garrison in Wales, and established, it is probable, for a purpose similar to the original institution of that *order* in Palestine. He likewise, more strongly fortified the castle of that town, with the fortress at Basingwerk; and that he might secure the conquests he had made, by rendering more easy the marching of armies, he cut down the woods, and constructed new roads through the country he had subdued.† Owen did not remain an indifferent spectator of transactions so inimical to the interests of his country. He descended frequently from his post on the hill, to skirmish with the king's troops, and to molest them in their designs; ‡ but no general action ensued;

* Annales Waverleiensis, p. 159.

† Math. Paris, p. 81. ‡ Manuscript of Caradoc, ut supra. Stowe's Chron. ibid.

the two princes had been taught prudence by their past experience, and did not chuse to risk the fate of their separate armies by engaging in improper situations. At the same time, the English fleet under the conduct of Madoc ap Meredydd the prince of Powys, made a descent on the island of Anglesey, ravaged a part of the country, and plundered two churches: on returning to their ships, the party was attacked by the whole strength of the island, and entirely cut in pieces. Dismayed with the fate of their associates, the English fleet weighed anchor, and sailed back to Chester.* Owen derived little advantage from these fortunate incidents; as the English were in force, and strongly fortified in the maritime parts of Flintshire. The wise measure likewise which Henry had employed in having stationed a fleet on the coast of Wales, gave the Welsh prince reason to

* Welsh Chron. p. 207. Giraldus Cambr. Itin. lib. II. cap. VII. William Newburgh, lib. II. cap. V. Brompton's Chron. p. 1048.

fear that his army, cooped up in the interior parts of the country, might be in danger of perishing for want of necessary sustenance; as his kingdom had been accustomed to receive from foreign countries a great part of its provisions. These motives, cogent as they may be, will scarcely justify Owen as a magnanimous and independent sovereign, in concluding a peace with the king of England, upon terms so injurious to his country, and to his own particular honour and interests. By this treaty, he himself and his chieftains submitted to do homage to Henry,* and which ceremony was performed in Snowdun; † to yield up those castles and districts in North Wales, which in the late reign had been obtained from the English; ‡ to take Cadwalader his brother into favour, and to restore him his territories.§ What contributed still more to

A. D. 1157. 3rd of Henry II.

* Brompton's Chron. p. 1048.

† Probably at Conway, where the district of Snowdun began. Math. Paris, p. 81.

‡ Annales Waverleiensis, p. 159.

§ Welsh Chron. p. 208.

complete the humiliating scene, he was obliged to deliver up two of his sons as pledges of his future obedience.*

Thus have we seen the Welsh nation, by a solemn act of their sovereign, and by the means of an English fleet, reduced again to a dependance on the crown of England If the long and gallant resistance which these people had made for freedom, against a power so very unequal, excite our admiration and wonder, we shall be no less surprised that a nation like the English, so much farther advanced in political wisdom, should not have been able sooner to terminate the contest.

The year after this important event, a general peace took place between England and Wales.† The princes and all
A. D. 1158. the chieftains of South Wales repaired to the court of England; where Henry

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 79.

† Welsh Chron. p. 108.

granted them peace, on the terms of doing homage for their own territories; and on their ceding to him those districts, which in the late reign had been recovered from the English.*

Rhys the son of Gryffydd ap Rhys, the immediate heir to the sovereign dignity in South Wales, was not included in the general pacification.

Animated with the same spirit which had heretofore distinguished his family, this prince was not willing tamely to yield up to ambitious foreigners, a sovereign dignity, which had descended to him through a long line of ancestors. Under the just fears that Henry would employ his force against him, he commanded his vassals to remove their goods and cattle into the forest of Towi; and from whence, unsupported by any confederate, he made war against the English.†

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 80.
† Welsh Chron. p. 208.

Pleased with his gallant spirit, or afraid of his power, Henry sent him an invitation to his court, under the assurance of a gracious reception; but threatened at the same time, if he rejected the friendly overture, that the whole force of Wales and of England should be employed to convey him thither.*

The high spirit of the Welsh prince was obliged to submit to so alarming a summons; and by the advice of his friends he repaired to Henry's court; where having done homage, and given up two of his sons as hostages for his fidelity, the district of Cantrev Mawr, the ancient demesne of his family, was promised him.‡ But contrary to that promise, the king gave him only a few lordships, and other estates remote from each other, and intermixed with the English

* Welsh Chron. p. 208.

† Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 81. The like security was exacted from all the other Welsh chieftains and princes.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 208.

territories: with the design, no doubt, by such a disposition of his property, to render his power less dangerous. Necessity obliged Rhys to remain quiet under such unjust and mortifying treatment.*

The situation of this prince, though little to be envied, excited the rapacious spirit of Walter Clifford, and of another English lord; who making an inroad into his territories, slew many of his vassals, and carried away considerable spoils. Rhys sent immediate intelligence to the king of this outrage, desiring satisfaction for the injury he had received. But Henry, partial to the conduct of his English subjects, and regarding with a jealous eye the interests of the Welsh, paid no other attention to his complaints, than holding out to him fallacious assureances of redress. Incensed at a conduct so faithless, Rhys threw off his allegiance; determined that his sword should do him that justice, which had been denied him

* Welsh Chron. p. 208.

by the English king.* He begun his revolt, by laying siege to the castle of Llandovery † in Caermarthenshire, of which he soon gained possession. At the same time Einion, nephew to the Welsh prince, alike eager to throw off the ignominious yoke, flew to arms; regarding the oath of allegiance which his uncle had taken as dissolved; the obligation on the part of the king, of doing justice and of affording protection, not having been observed. He invested the castle of Humfrey, which he took by storm, and put the garrison to the sword. In this fortress, he found a number of horses and implements of war sufficient to equip a considerable body of men. Rhys, likewise, with equal rapidity and success, spread over the whole country of Caerdigan; which he soon brought under his subjection, after having levelled to the ground every fortress belonging to the English.‡

* Dr. Powel's notes on Girald. Camb. Itin. lib. I. cap. X.

† *Llanymddyfri.* ‡ Welsh Chron. p. 209.

Henry regarded this revolt of sufficient importance to demand his presence in South Wales, and entered that country by the sea coast of Glamorgan. But finding all his efforts ineffectual, he was under the necessity of giving up the enterprise,* and of leaving Rhys ap Gryffydd in possession of his conquests; on no other condition than that of giving hostages for the preservation of the peace during the king's absence in Normandy.† Thus did the prince of South Wales, deserted by all his confederates, baffle the efforts of a mighty monarch. A. D. 1158. 4th of Henry II.

His subsequent conduct, by making a sudden inroad into Pembroke, though only contending for his hereditary rights, yet threw some stain upon his honour; as it was likely to expose the hostages,‡ in Henry's hands, to the cruel treatment usual in these times. Having laid siege A. D. 1159.

* Giraldus Cambrensis, lib. 2. cap. X.

† Welsh Chron. p. 209.

‡ Brompton's Chron. p. 1059.

to Caermarthen, the earl of Bristol, natural son to Henry, with the earl of Clare, and the Welsh prince Cadwalader, his brother by marriage, besides two other barons, came to the relief of that place. Howel and Cynan, the sons of the prince of North Wales, joined too, in the unnatural alliance. Unable to resist so formidable an opposition, Rhys retreated to the mountains of Cevn-Rester, in which strong post he remained in security. The confederate army, encamping for some time at Dynwyllir, built there a castle; after which, having no intelligence of Rhys ap Gryffydd, they broke up their camp, and returned to their respective countries. *

A. D. 1160. Madoc ap Meredydd, the last prince of Powys, dying at Winchester, his remains were removed from thence and interred at Meivod in Montgomeryshire, the usual burial place of his family. After his death, that principality, one

* Welsh Chron. p. 210.

half of which, called Powys Vadoc, he had held entire,* underwent several divisions by the custom of gavel-kind, and was never again united under one sovereign, This prince left three sons, Gryffydd Maelor, Owen, and Elis; besides a daughter by Susannah his wife, who was the daughter of Gryffydd ap Cynan; he had, also, Owen Brogyntyn, and two other sons who were illegitimate; all of whom shared, agreeably to the custom of Wales, the paternal inheritance. Likewise, Owen his nephew, the son of Gryffydd ap Meredydd, stiled Owen Cyveilioc, had a district called by that name, which contained near half of Powys.† The sovereignty of England was acknowledged by all these chieftains.

Henry being returned from Normandy, and having reduced the other Welsh princes to his obedience, turned all his attention to the affairs of South Wales; and to the hostilities lately committed A. D. 1163. 9th of Henry II.

* Welsh Chron. p. 210, 211. † Ibid.

against him by Rhys ap Gryffydd. That prince, still remaining unsubdued, had, during the absence of the English monarch, continually infested the adjacent country, from his strong post on the mountains of Brecknock; encouraged by some prophecies then current in Wales, that the king would never return into England.* Incensed at the frequent violations of the peace, Henry invaded South Wales; and advancing as far as Pencadaer, received the submission of Rhys; who, despairing of being able any longer to resist his power, a second time did him homage, and delivered up hostages likewise for his future fidelity.† This ceremony was also performed the year following at Woodstock; where Rhys ap Gryffydd, attended by the other princes and chieftains in Wales, did homage to the English king, and to Henry his son.‡

A. D. 1164. 10th of Henry II.

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Hen. II. vol. II. p. 152.

† Welsh Chron. p. 220.

‡ V. Diceto. Ymag. Hist. sub Ann. 1136. Math. Paris, p. 84.

The submissive demeanour of Rhys ap Gryffydd was of no long continuance. His impatient spirit was again set on fire by an outrage; marking equally the ferocity of the times, as the weak, or partial government of the English king. Einion, the nephew of the Welsh prince, and a gallant youth, had been lately murdered in his bed by his own servant, at the instigation of the earl of Gloucester.* Finding no protection from the English, or safety in submission, Rhys once more determined to trust his fortunes to the decision of arms. In his first enterprise, he obtained possession of the territory of Dinevawr, and the large district of Cantrev Mawr. Having recovered the ancient demesnes of his family, he then invaded the territory of the earl of Gloucester; destroying in his progress, the castle of Aberrheidiol, † and other fortresses belonging to the enemy; and, at length,

* Wynne's Hist. Wales, p. 189. Chron. of Wales, p. 220.

† On the confluence of the rivers *Rheidiol* and *Ystwyth*.

he reduced likewise the entire province of Caerdigan. Eager to recover his hereditary honours, and receiving, no doubt, an additional incentive from the place where he then resided, which had been the royal seat of his ancestors, Rhys carried his arms into Pembroke; and making many inroads on the estates of the Flemings, and ravaging their country, he returned to the castle of Dinevawr, enriched with spoils, and high in the esteem of his country.*

Fired by this gallant example, a spirit of revolt sprung up in Wales. With great judgment this prince, during the winter, either by his deputies, or in person, had conferences with the different Welsh princes. He called up their sleeping virtue, and roused it into action, by such incentives as were likely to touch a warm, free, and spirited people. He pointed out the prospect of asserting their freedom, which had of late opened on their country, from the dissensions which

* Welsh Chron. p. 220.

had arisen in England between Henry and the archbishop of Canterbury; and from the probability, likewise, that this prince would soon be engaged in a war with France; that country, as well as the Pope, having espoused the cause of Becket. *

Animated by his generous spirit, by the prosperity which had attended his arms, and by such a favourable conjuncture, the prince of North Wales and all his sons, his brother Cadwalader and the chieftains of Powys, joined Rhys ap Gryffydd; in hopes of regaining the independency they had lost, and of recovering that honour which of late they had forfeited. At no period, had the Welsh nation united into a confederacy like this; concentering with so much energy and force, the various policies and interests, the different tempers and abilities of the princes of Wales.†

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 439.

† Welsh Chron. p. 220. British Antiq. revived by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 23.

The first enterprise, under the conduct of David the son of Owen Gwynedd, was an inroad into Flintshire, where he committed most grievous devastations; carrying away the cattle and inhabitants to the Vale of Clwyd. *

During the absence of the king in Normandy, some forces had been levied by parliament for the reduction of Rhys ap Gryffydd. † Henry, on his arrival, marched with these troops into Flintshire, A. D. 1165. 11th of Henry II. for the protection of Rhuddlan castle; which fortress he was afraid that the Welsh would besiege. The enemy having retired, and the king, not being sufficiently in force to pursue them, stayed only a few days to augment his garrisons, and marched back into England; in order, by raising new levies, to prosecute the war with greater vigour. ‡

* Welsh Chron. p. 221.

† Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Hen. II. vol. II. p. 440.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 221. Brompton's Chron. sub Ann. 1165. Chronica Gervasii, p. 1398. Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. lib. II. cap. X.

His British dominions, and the different territories he possessed in France, furnished him with their choicest troops; from Normandy, Anjou, and Gascony, from Guienne, Flanders, and Britany; and with this combined and formidable force he marched into Powys, in the full resolution of exterminating the inhabitants.

The English army entered the Welsh confines at Oswestry, where Henry encamped for some time;* in expectation that the terror of his arms might, by shaking the firmness of the confederate princes, call them back to their allegiance; or at least, that the protection which such a power would naturally afford, might detach from the common cause the chieftains of the house of Powys, the usual adherents of his family. It might have been expected that a con-

* Welsh Chron. p. 221. Brompton's Chron. sub Ann. 1165 Chron. Gerv. p. 1398. Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. lib. II. cap. X.

federacy like this, heterogeneous in itself, and forming its union from a sudden impulse, rather than from steady principles of either policy or patriotism, would would have shrunk from so formidable an armament. But, determined to rescue their country from a foreign domination, or to perish in the attempt, the Welsh princes remained firm and intrepid.

The power of North Wales was collected under the command of Owen Gwynedd and his brother Cadwalader; the forces of South Wales were led by the gallant Rhys ap Gryffydd; those of Powys by Owen Cyveilioc and the sons of Madoc ap Meredydd. With these troops were joined the inhabitants of the country situated between the Wye and the Severn, under the leading of their chieftains, the two sons of Madoc ap Ednerth.

The combined forces of the Welsh assembled at Corwen, a strong country in Edeyrnion; in which situation of ad-

vantage they waited the approach of the English. With a view of advancing nearer to the enemy, and desirous of bringing on an action, Henry marched his army to the Ceiriog; a river in the county of Denbigh, and which runs through the Vale of that name. And that he might not be liable to the ambuscades of the Welsh, he ordered the woods on each side of the banks to be cut down.* It was probably on the passage of this river, that the English monarch was in imminent danger of his life. Attempting to force a bridge, an arrow aimed at him by the hand of a Welshman, must inevitably have pierced his body, if Hubert de St. Clare, constable of Colchester, perceiving the danger, had not in a moment sprung before his sovereign, and received it into his own bosom; of which wound he instantly died.†

* Welsh Chron. p. 221.

† Welsh Chron. p. 222. Holinshead's Chron. p. 73. who says, this accident happened at the siege of Bridge North.

While the English were employed in cutting down the woods, a party of the Welsh, without any orders from their leaders, but who were acquainted with the ford, passed over the river; and made a sudden attack on the van of Henry's army, composed of pikemen, who were considered as the flower of his troops. A warm action ensued; many were slain on both sides; at length Henry gained the passage; and advancing still farther, came to the mountain of Berwyn, where, in order to refresh his forces, he lay in camp several days. The two armies, during this interval, seemed to stand in awe of each other. The English were stationed on the acclivity of the hills; and the Welsh, presenting a dark and formidable front, were posted upon the summit of the opposite mountains. The situation of Henry soon became critical. For the Welsh, watching every movement, and losing no opportunity of cutting off his provisions, reduced his army to great distress for want of victuals and forage;

the soldiers being afraid to stir out of the camp. To increase still more his danger, there fell on a sudden such violent rains, as rendered it difficult for his soldiers to stand on their feet in that broken and slippery country; such torrents of water, likewise, poured down from the hills into the vale where he lay encamped, that he was obliged to retire, with great loss of aminution and of men, and to afford the Welsh so glorious an occasion of triumph.* Deeply wounded with a sense of his disgrace, the liberal spirit of Henry was thrown off its bias. To gratify a mean revenge, unworthy of a hero, of injuring those whom his arms had not been able to subdue, and that, too, in a manner, so wounding to sensibility; he commanded the eyes of those hostages, which had been formerly given him, to be put out. Among the number of these unfortunate victims were the two sons of Rhys ap

* Welsh Chron. p. 222.

Gryffydd, and two sons of the sons of the prince of North Wales.*

Thus baffled in his operations at land, Henry had recourse to the more effectual measure of attacking the Welsh by sea. With this view he repaired to Chester; and remained there some time, until he had collected his fleet, and had received a reinforcement of ships, which he expected out of Ireland. Having finished these preparations, he suddenly gave up the design, without any apparent cause; and dismissed both his fleet and his army.† Unacquainted as we are with his motives, we can only account for this extraordinary conduct, in a prince so wise and spirited as Henry, from a just or

* Holinshead's Chron. p. 73. who says, that besides these above-mentioned, he caused the sons and daughters of several Welsh lords, to be treated with the same severity: ordering the eyes of the young striplings to be pecked out of their heads, and the ears of the young gentlewomen to be stuffed. Welsh Chron. p. 222. † Welsh Ch. p. 222.

imaginary fear, that his foreign dominions would be attacked while he was prosecuting the war in Wales. Whatever were the motives of his conduct, it is certain that Henry had tarnished the reputation of his arms; and of consequence that the Welsh princes were more strongly confirmed in their revolt.

Rhys ap Gryffydd, suddenly investing the castle of Caerdigan, gained possession of that fortress; and then invading the adjacent country, he made himself master of the castle of Cilgerran,* a place of the greatest importance, which he levelled with the ground. The Welsh prince, then, with great spoils, returned into his own territories, with an additional lustre to his arms.

To keep up the spirit of revolt, and divide the attention of the English, the prince of North Wales took the castle of A. D. 1166.

* Situated on the banks of the Tivi near Caerdigan.

Basingwerk, lately fortified by Henry, which he entirely demolished.*

If any thing could have taught the Welsh the strong necessity of union, to counteract the designs of an oppressive and hereditary enemy, it must have been the prosperity which had attended the late exertion of their arms; and which had raised them on a sudden from an ignominious dependence, to manly resistance, and generous sentiments, and to the attainment of their freedom. But a spirit of disunion, inherent in their genius; contracting their views, and governing their conduct, precluded any system of general policy; and the public safety was left to depend upon rude valour, on a country almost inaccessible, on the caprice of accidents, and on the springs of irregular passions.

Instead of giving efficacy to their late exertions, by a more close and firmer

* Welsh Chron. p. 223.

union, Owen Cyveilioc and Owen Vychan, two of the lords of Powys, wrested from a chieftain of eminence, the estates he possessed in that country; and which they divided between themselves. A like spirit of rapacity influenced the other princes of Wales. Breaking the ties of a common interest, the prince of North Wales, and his brother Cadwalader, with Rhys ap Gryffydd, invaded and took possession of the territory of Owen Cyfeilioc;* who, with the other chieftains of Powys, had so lately joined the confederacy against Henry. A part of this territory Owen Gwynedd retained to his own share; the other parts he gave to Owen Vychan and to Rhys ap Gryffydd.† But Owen Cyveilioc, soon after, by the assistance of an English army, recovered his patrimony; an event of no moment in itself, but only serving to mark the little justice or wisdom which directed the conduct of the confederate princes.‡

* Welsh Chron. p. 223, 224.

† Brit. Ant. reviv. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 5, 6.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 224.

Influenced by motives, more liberal and manly, the Welsh princes, in the absence of the English monarch, invested the castle of Rhuddlan; lately fortified by Henry, and a place of importance upon the English frontier. The garrison made a gallant defence, and resisted, a long time, and with great spirit, the utmost efforts of the assailants; at length, after a siege of two months, this fortress was taken, and levelled with the ground. With less difficulty, the princes obtained possession of the castle of Prestatyn,
A. D. 1167. which they likewise demolished. The fortifications of Basingwerk having been lately destroyed, this success gave Owen Gwynedd the entire possession of the maritime parts of Flintshire.*

A concern of greater importance than the revolt of the Welsh, had of late employed the attention of Henry. He was, at this time, in Normandy, engaged in a war with Lewis king of France. The

* Welsh Chron. p. 224.

confederate Welsh princes, desirous of entangling the English monarch more deeply in foreign disputes, sent, in conjunction with William the *Lion*, king of Scotland, ambassadors to the French court; with an offer of aid to carry on the war against Henry. It does not appear that this proposal was accepted; though it was the first attempt we have seen of the kind, which marked the growing importance of the Welsh princes; and the influence of which, they were desirous of extending to the continent.*

The rising prosperity of the Welsh was checked, on a sudden, by the death of Owen Gwynedd the prince of North Wales. He reigned thirty-two years, and was buried in the cathedral church of Bangor. This prince married, for his first wife, Gwladys, daughter to Llywarch ap Trahaearn lord of Pembroke, by whom he had only Iorwerth Drwyndwn, or A. D. 1169.

* Lord Lyttleton's Hist. Henry II. vol. II. p. 534. from V. Epist. prædict.

Edward with the broken nose; by his second wife Christian, daughter of Gronw the son of Owen ap Edwyn lord of Englefield, he had David, Roderic lord of Anglesey, Cadwallon who was abbot of Bardsey, and Angharad married to Gryffydd Maelor. He had likewise twelve other children by different women.*

It has been often said, that in order to form a just estimate of the happiness of individuals, we are to wait until the period of their lives. It is in the same manner that we must judge of the character of the late prince. We have seen him in the early part of his reign, with equal prosperity and valour, resisting the mighty efforts of a wise and powerful monarch: and with a patriotism that reflected honour

* Hist. Gwedir Family, p. 3. According to the Welsh Chron. p. 226, this prince had by his first wife, besides his eldest son Iorwerth; Cynan, Maelgon, and Gwenllian; and by different women, Cynan, Meredydd, Rhun, Llewelyn, Edwal, Howel, Cadell, Madoc, Einion, Cynwric, Philip, Ririd.

upon his judgment, we have seen him, on various occasions, aiding the generous designs of Rhys ap Gryffydd. From what motive, then, shall we account for the change in his conduct? Having gained the advantage in the conflict at Counsyllt, without any apparent cause, unless it were the expediency of the moment, he himself, under humiliating circumstances, submitted to become the vassal of a foreign prince; and in the consequence, reduced the chieftains of his country to the like dishonourable situation. Instead of affording protection to Rhys ap Gryffydd, which a just policy demanded; we see him, at one time, aiding the designs of the English monarch to crush his gallant coadjutor; and, another time, we see him, wasting the national strength, and diverting its force, and tearing asunder the ties of union and of confidence, by attempting to conquer the territories of Owen Cyveilioc. Inspired by the example of Rhys ap Gryffydd, and joined in confederacy with the other Welsh princes, we at length see him, with an increase

of importance to his country, recover independency. In this happy period of his days, full of years and surrounded by his children, he relinquished the busy theatre of the world; and, although the mid-day of his life was clouded and inglorious, the the evening became serene, and closed with honour to himself and advantage to his country.

SO whimsical and indecisive was the mode of succession, that as many sons of the late prince laid claim to the crown, as were under the influence of ambition, or of a fiery and turbulent spirit. Iorwerth his eldest son, was unanimously set aside on account of a blemish which he had in his face; and he appears to have resigned himself quietly to the public judgment.*

* He had however assigned him for his maintenance, a part of his father's inheritance; the *cantrevs* of Nanconwy and Ardudwy; and resided at the castle of Dolwyddelan, situated in the county of Caernarvon. Hist. Gwedir Fam. p. 7.—This prince was afterwards obliged to take sanctuary at Pennant Melangell in Montgomeryshire, where he died.

Howel, a natural son of the late prince, born of an Irish-woman, being the first who started for the prize, gained for a time a precarious possession of the throne. David, the eldest son of Owen Gwynedd by a second wife, regarding his own right, in this contest, as indisputable; and disdaining to hold under the sovereignty of a brother, illegitimate and born of a foreign woman, raised an army, fought a battle with his rival, and slew him in the action.* By this victory, David obtained the quiet possession of the throne of North Wales.† A. D. 1169.

Madoc, another son of the late prince, seeing the contention which agitated the fiery spirits of his brothers, with a courage equal to theirs, but far more liberally directed, gave himself up to the danger and uncertainty of seas, which had been hitherto unexplored. He is said to have embarked with a few ships; sailing to the west, and leaving Ireland to the north, he

* Welsh Chron. p. 227.

† Memoir Gwed, Fam. p. 7. Welsh Chr. p. 227.

traversed the ocean, until he arrived by accident upon the coast of America. Pleased with its appearance, he left in that country a great part of his people; and returning for a fresh supply, was joined by many adventurers, both men and women; who, encouraged by flattering descriptions of advantage, and sick of the disorders which reigned in their native kingdom,* were desirous of seeking an asylum in the wilds of America.†

* We know nothing of the reality of this discovery, but what is gathered from the poems of Meredydd ap Rhys, who flourished in the year 1470; of Gutwin Owen in 1480; and Cynfrig ap Gronw near the same period. These bards preceded the expedition of Columbus; and relate or allude to that of Madoc, as an event well known, and universally received, to have happened three hundred years before. See Jones' Musical Relics of the Welsh bards, p. 19.

† Humphrey Lhuyd. Welsh Chron. p. 228.

☞ The supposed existence of Welsh Indians in America has, for many years, elicited much discussion; and various but ineffectual attempts have been made to discover them. A very intelligent gentleman informed me, at New York, in the year 1819, that he corresponded on the subject with Mr. Evan Evans, who is well known to have gone

It seems, as if the death of the late prince of North Wales, had suddenly dissolved the confederacy, and as if the motives for union no longer subsisted. Rhys ap Gryffydd, having lately reduced that part of Powys, which had been the territory of Owen Cyveilioc, gave king Henry the meeting; while he pursued his journey into Ireland. At this conference, he was received into the king's peace, and was confirmed in all the possessions, which he, at that time enjoyed; and in consideration of which, he offered that monarch a considerable supply of oxen and horses towards the conquest he was meditating; and as a farther pledge of his future fidelity, offered him likewise fourteen hostages. Henry proceeding in his progress through South Wales, and having entered into the

A. D. 1172. 18th of Henry II.

over to America in search of them, and to have traversed the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. His enterprizing endeavours, however, were unavailing; he could find no trace whatever of any such people. Captains Lewis and Clarke were strictly directed, by the American Government, to make similar inquiries, but they were equally unsuccessful. W. WILLIAMS.

city of Caer Lleon upon Usk, ejected Iorwerth the lord of that place, whose fidelity he suspected. Highly incensed at this outrage, Iorwerth, on the king's departure, sent his two sons, with many of his kindred and a number of their followers, to recover possession both of the town and fortress. They succeeded in part; the town they took and demolished; but they were baffled in every attempt which they made against the castle. The king, pursuing his journey to Pembroke, bestowed upon Rhys a considerable extension of territory; all Caerdigan, Strath-Towi, Arustly, and Elvel. He likewise visited that prince at one of his palaces, called the white house, or *Ty Gwyn*, in the present county of Caermarthen; where he delivered up his son Howel, who had been long left as a hostage in Henry's hands; he excused likewise for a time the delivery of those hostages which had been lately promised, and remitted also the payment of the tribute until his return out of Ireland.*

* Welsh Chron. p. 230, 231.

The patriotism of the Welsh prince sunk under the influence of these mutual civilities. The gallant and independent spirit inherited from a long line of ancestors, and which had so eminently distinguished his own conduct; all that the terror of Henry's arms and a series of hostilities could not shake, was done away by a few acts of a well directed courtesey. Forsaking the dignity and importance of his character, except in a single instance, we shall see him in future only as a *satrap* to the English monarch. Mingling in the common mass, and losing for ever the ancient honours of his family, neither this prince nor his descendants, from this period,* will retain any marks of sovereignty.†

On the return of Henry out of Ireland, the expedition having been rendered fruitless by a sickness among his soldiers, A. D. 1172.

* From this period the heads of this family were only distinguished by the titles of *Arglwyddi*, or lords. Humfrey Lhuyd's Brev. p. 73.

† Humfrey Lhuyd, p. 76.

he was again met by Rhys ap Gryffydd at Talacharn in Caermarthenshire; where he paid him the customary duty of a vassal. *

So difficult is it to eradicate the sentiments of freedom out of minds accustomed to the ideas of independence, and so natural are injustice and cruelty to men who are desirous of exterminating that invaluable blessing, that Henry found he had not obtained the point of his ambition, by disarming Rhys ap Gryffydd. Another family, stung with a sense of injury, sprung up to avenge their own private wrongs, and, if possible, for a time, to stem the torrent which was overwhelming their country.

Before Henry's return into England he had sent a safe conduct to Iorwerth, the chieftain whom he had so lately injured; desiring that he himself, his sons, and all his retainers, would meet him at a certain place on the borders; that he might conclude a peace with them, and might leave

* Welsh Chron. p, 232.

that country in perfect tranquillity. Iorwerth paid instant obedience to the king's summons, and sent orders to his son Owen to do the same, and also to give him the meeting on the road. The soldiers who garrisoned the New Castle* upon Usk, being informed that Owen was on his journey in obedience to his father's commands, laid wait for the young chieftain, whom they met on the road, and barbarously murdered; unarmed and almost without attendants, and resting in security on the protection of a great monarch. It is not to be supposed, that a magnanimous prince like Henry, had any knowledge of a transaction so cruel, so faithless, and impolitic. Some of the attendants who escaped the massacre, carried the account of it to the father; who, deeply wounded by so poignant an injury, returned home with his other son Howel; determined in future to have no reliance on the faith of the English. Collecting all the Welsh, whom he himself, or his friends could engage in his cause, he made

* The present Newport.

A. D. 1172. incursions into those parts of Monmouth which were possessed by the English; laying waste those districts, and the bordering counties of England, as far as the gates of Hereford and Gloucester.*

The English king, hearing of this insurrection, appointed Rhys ap Gryffydd chief justice of South Wales.† He thought, and with a penetrating mind, that even the shadow of power, amusing a spirit capricious and vain, might conciliate the affections of this lord; and be a means of diverting his attention from the real dignity and power, which had been wrested from his family.

The event justified the ideas of Henry. A civil war having broken out between that prince and his eldest son, Rhys ap Gryffydd sent a chosen body of troops to the assistance of the English monarch. A far different spirit influenced the conduct of Iorwerth the other Welsh chief-

* Welsh Chron. p. 232.

† British Ant. rev. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 23.

tain. Taking advantage of the dissensions which then prevailed in England, he laid siege to the city of Caer Lleon, of which he was the natural lord, and gained possession of that place; he then invested the castle, which soon surrendered on condition of giving up the prisoners he had taken; and pursuing his success, he brought all Gwent-Is-Coed in Monmouth, except a single fortress, under his subjection.*

A spirit of rapacity and injustice, very early in his reign, had influenced the conduct of David prince of North Wales. By force of arms, he took possession of the island of Anglesey, the property of Roderic his brother;† whom he closely confined in prison; he likewise seized on the territories of the rest of his brothers, and his other kinsmen, whom he also banished the realm.‡ A. D. 1173.

To subdue the little virtue which re-

* Welsh Chr. p. 234. † Mem. Gwed. Fam. p. 8.
‡ Welsh Chron. p. 234.

mained in the country, Henry employed a new mode of seduction; a spring that
A. D. was not likely to fail of success. He gave
1175. to David the Welsh prince his sister Emma * in marriage; thus disarming an hereditary enemy, by the fascinating influence of ambition and love.† On his marriage with the English princess, David sent over into Normandy a body of Welsh, a thousand in number, to the assistance of the king his brother-in-law; ‡ Henry being at that time engaged in a war with France.

A. D. 1176. 22nd of Hen. II.

Such was the state of affairs in the principality of North Wales. The stream ran equally in favour of the English in South Wales. The old king, and Henry his son, held a great council at Gloucester, for settling the peace of South Wales and of the borders. To this meeting came

* By this princess David had a son named Owen. See Hist. Gwedir Family, p. 12.

† Benedict Abbas, vol. I. p. 205. Hist. Gwedir Family, p. 8.

‡ Holinshead, vol. II. p. 93. Welsh Ch. p. 235.

Rhys ap Gryffydd, just returned in the service of Henry from the siege of Tutbury castle; attended by seven chieftains* of eminence, all of them lords in South Wales, and connected with his family by blood or by alliance: and even Iorwerth, forgetting his injuries, repaired with them to Gloucester, where they all did homage, and made their submissions to the English monarch. † In consequence of this, through the mediation of Rhys, they obtained pardon of the king for all former offences. To render the royal favour more complete, Iorwerth was confirmed in the possession of Caer Lleon.‡ And, to unite more closely his vassals, both English and Welsh, who were present at the assembly, the king obliged them to take an oath,

* Cadwallon ap Madog, of Melienydd, who was cousin-german to Rhys; Einion Glyd, of Elfel; Einion ap Rhys, of Gwrthrynion, son-in-law to Rhys; Morgan ap Caradoc ap Iestyn, of Glamorgan; Gryffydd ap Ifor ap Meuryg, of Senghennyth; Seisyllt ap Dyfnwal, of higher Gwent, brother-in-law to Rhys; and Iorwerth ap Owen, of Caer Lleon.

† Brit. Ant. Rev. by Vaughan of Hengwrt, p. 23.

‡ Welsh Chron. p. 236.

that if any one should be separately attacked by any other power in Wales, all the rest should unite in his defence.*

It appears, at this period, as if the sense of their native independence, that
A. D. 1176. invigorating principle of action, no longer subsisted in the minds of the Welsh. David prince of North Wales, Rhys ap Gryffydd, Owen Cyveilioc, and other chieftains in Powys, with many of the Welsh nobility, repaired, upon Henry's summons, to a parliament which he held at Oxford; † a scene, flattering to the English monarch, in which the spirit of the Welsh princes is seen to bend under the influence of superior talents.‡

* Benedict Abbas, p. 110. Brompton's Chron. sub Ann. 1175, p. 1102.

† Holinshead, p. 101. Benedict Abbas, vol. I. p. 111. Hovedon, p. 566.

‡ At this parliament, Henry gave Elesmere in the marches to David prince of North Wales, and the territory of Meirionydd to Rhys ap Gryffydd. Hovedon, p. 566. Benedict Abbas, p. 205.

The spirit of the times, fostered by deadly feuds and by national hatred, was kept alive and rendered more ferocious by a series of reiterated injuries. Henry de Hereford, uncle to William de Bruce lord of Brecknock, had been lately murdered by several of those chieftains, who, in the preceding year had become vassals to king Henry. To revenge this murder on the heads of the perpetrators, but under pretext of celebrating their late union, William de Bruce invited to an entertainment at his castle of Abergavenny, Seisyllt ap Dyfnwal, Geoffry his son, and many other chiefs of the most considerable distinction in Gwent. In the midst of their festivity, with a view of inflaming their minds, and of giving some colour to the baseness of his design, he informed the Welsh chieftains, that in future they should not travel armed either with their swords or their bows; and he instantly required them to take an oath for the due performance of the same. It is easy to imagine in what manner a

A. D. 1177.

fiery and high-spirited nobility would relish so imperious a command, which they would only consider as a badge of their slavery. It was universally rejected. On a signal, then, being made, a number of armed soldiers, who had been stationed in the castle for this purpose, rushed into the hall, and massacred the Welsh lords.* Not satisfied with the blood which he had already shed, Bruce, attended, by his ruffians, proceeded to the house of Seisyllt, at no great distance, which he set on fire; then, seizing the wife of that chieftain, and murdering in her presence her infant son, he carried away the wretched mother to the castle of Abergavenny.* As the justice of Henry did not severely punish this outrage, which every law of prudence and humanity demanded, we have the liberty of thinking, that even that great prince knew, when to relax its usual vigour and firmness.

* Math. Paris, p. 110.

† Welsh Chron. p. 236, 237. Wynne's Hist. of Wales, p. 204.

Roderic who had been lately imprisoned by his brother the prince of North Wales, broke out of his confinement, and fled into Anglesey; where he was universally received by the people as their sovereign; David, the reigning prince, having rendered himself odious by his cruelty, and having grown bold in the exercise of tyranny, by his alliance with the English king. David, unable to oppose, thought it prudent to withdraw from the storm, and retired for security to the English side of the Conway;* retaining in his possession only the castle of Rhuddlan, and the territories adjacent, which he held by the assistance of an English garrison.† The young prince Llewelyn, the son of Iorwerth Drwyndwn, was at this time under the protection of his uncle Roderic, and resided in his court.‡

Cadwalader, the brother of Owen Gwynedd, having been forced, by the

* Welsh Chron. p. 236, 237.

† Hist. Gwedir Family, p. 8. ‡ Ibid. p. 9.

severity of that prince, to reside some time in England, and to solicit the assistance of Henry; was at this time murdered by the English on his journey into Wales, while he was travelling under the safe conduct of the king. This breach of public faith soon met with exemplary punishment. All the persons concerned in the murder were condemned to the gibbet.* Such an act of justice, politic to the last degree, throws a lustre, in this instance, on the wisdom and humanity of Henry's government.†

A. D. 1179.

A. D. 1184. The sword of justice, however, a few years after was taken up by the Welsh themselves, enforced by the spirit of revenge; a spirit of all others the most potent in uncultivated minds. It seems,

* Math. Paris, p. 116, says Cadwallon; but he was slain before the death of his father. See Memoirs of Gwedir Fam. p. 1. Welsh. Chr. p. 288.

† This prince was the Lord of Caerdigan, and usually resided at the castle of Aberystwyth. Memoirs of Gwedir Family, p. 6, 7.

that Ranulph de Poer the sheriff of Gloucester, had been concerned with William de Bruce in the massacre committed, seven years before, in the castle of Abergavenny. And it is with reluctance we are obliged to relate, that this infamous transaction appears to have been perpetrated through the secret influence of the English king. * The nephews and the sons of Seisyllt ap Dyfnwal, and of the other chieftains who had fallen in the late scene of barbarity; having by this time arrived at a manly age, were strongly incited to revenge on the English, the murder of their kinsmen and parents. In pursuit of this design, early in the morning, they assaulted the castle of Abergavenny; and having scaled the walls, took possession of that fortress, and burning it to the ground, they carried away prisoners the governor and his wife, with all the garrison. The young chieftains, not having met with the objects of their vengeance, stormed another fortress lately

* Giraldus Cambrensis Itin. lib. I. cap. IV.

erected by Ranulph de Poer, near Monmouth; the garrison of which, unable to resist their fury, was driven down into the fosses of the castle, and slain by the launces of the enemy. Ranulph de Poer, with nine of the most distinguished persons in Monmouth, perished in the general carnage; and William de Bruce, himself, sorely wounded, and and overwhelmed in the fosse, was with difficulty rescued, and scarcely escaped with his life.*

Incensed at this outrage, the king of England advanced with a large army to Worcester, with the design of punishing the revolters. His resentment however was appeased by Rhys ap Gryffydd; who repairing to that city took fresh oaths of allegiance, and promised to deliver up, as pledges for the peace of the country, his son and his nephews.† But the young men, having in memory the fate of those

A. D. 1184. 30th of Henry II.

* Giraldus Cambrensis, Itin. lib. I. cap. IV. Roger Hovedon, p. 617.

† Holinshead, p. 108. Benedict Abbas, vol. II. p. 411. Welsh Chron. p. 240.

hostages, so lately the victims of Henry's resentment, absolutely refused to place themselves in the same perilous situation.*

The views of the English monarch were, at length, nearly accomplished; the unremitting efforts of his power and his policy, had subdued the spirit, or had seduced from their virtue, a disunited and improvident people. The fate of this nation was, however, suspended, by the death of its formidable enemy Henry the second. His eldesl son Richard succeeded to the throne of England.†

A. D. 1189. 35th year of his reign.

* Holinshead, p. 108. Benedict Abbas, vol. II. p. 411. Welsh Chron. p. 240.

* This event was followed by the death of Gryffydd Maelor, the son of Madoc ap Meredydd the son of Bleddyn ap Cynvyn. He was buried at Mivod, and was lord of the two Bromfields and Mochnant-Is-Rhaider, and left one son name Madoc, which he had by Angharad, daughter of Owen Gwynedd, to succeed to that part of his father's inheritance which was called Powys Vadoc. Welsh Chron. p. 242.

A. D. 1190. The pages of the Welsh annals are discoloured at this period by hideous pictures of savage manners. Influenced by the "spirit of the first born Cain," a brother's arm is raised in horrid succession against a brother's; the parent * and his children by a course of injuries are engaged in mutual hostilities, tearing asunder the ties of affection and of nature. † Scenes, such as these, so expressive of horror, disgust the eye of humanity; and as the objects which they present, are only of a private nature, and do not relate to great or to public concerns, it is with pleasure that we turn to the more agreeable prospects, which are opening to our view, of order and justice, of freedom and national importance.

* Rhys ap Gryffydd.

† Welsh Chron. from page 240 to 250.

END OF VOL. I.

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